

# THE OCTAVE OF BLESSING



REV. FRANK S. ARNOLD

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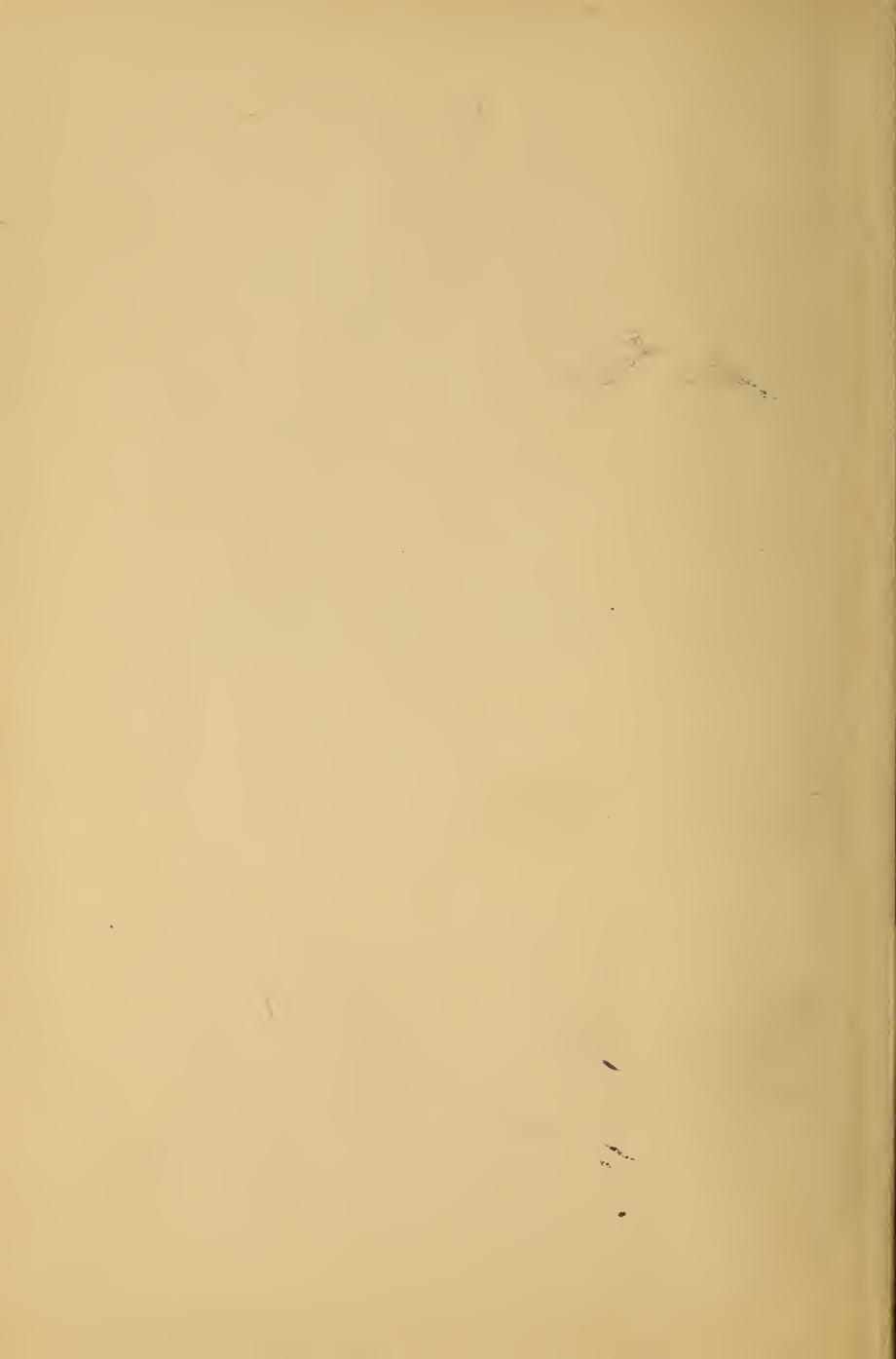








THE OCTAVE OF BLESSING.





# THE OCTAVE OF BLESSING

A PRESENT DAY APPLICATION  
OF THE BEATITUDES

ALSO THREE SERMONS ON  
LAWS OF SOUL GROWTH

BY THE  
REV. FRANK S. ARNOLD.

God, having raised up his Son Jesus, sent him to  
bless you.—ACTS iii. 26.

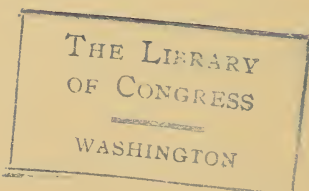
A whole octave of blessedness ushers in the gos-  
pel.—CHARLES H. PARKHURST.

CHICAGO  
THEODORE REESE  
155 La Salle St  
1895

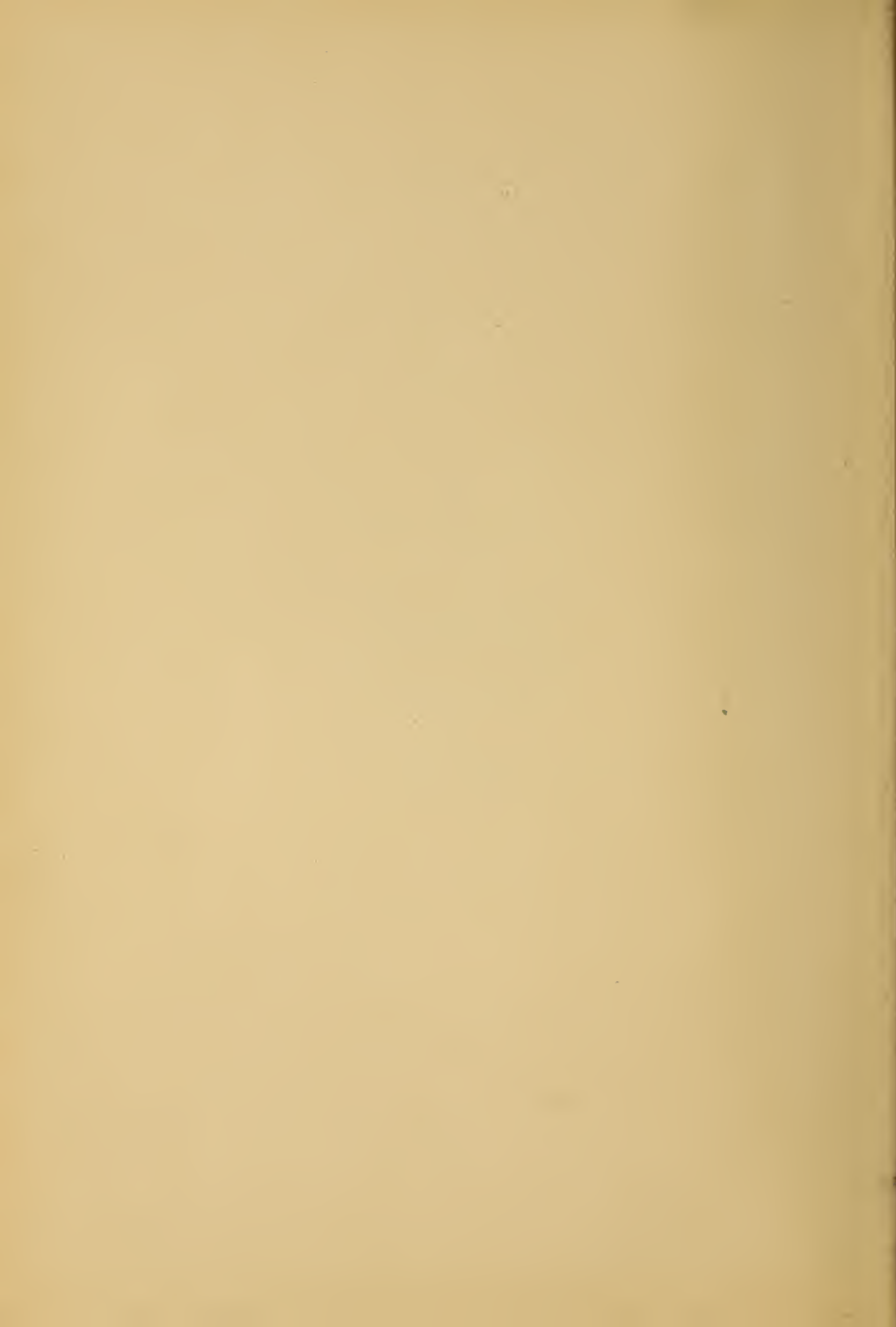


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TO  
ALL THOSE WHO  
LOVE THE  
LORD JESUS CHRIST  
IN  
SINCERITY AND TRUTH,  
THIS VOLUME  
IS  
INSCRIBED.



## PREFACE.

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The author's excuse for presuming on the lenience of a generous but burdened reading public is two-fold: First the frequent desire that friends have expressed for a published work from his hand; second, the personal satisfaction in the definiteness of this permanent form of expression. The most of these chapters were first presented as sermons. Some of them have been changed materially, others are almost the same as delivered. There is no claim to originality or beauty. The chief aim has been to put truth in perspicuous style. I am not aware of any particular indebtedness, unless it be to George McDonald, whose spirituality and simplicity have been both inspiration and example. The book is not intended for critics, but for those who are in full sympathy with the teachings of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, and the unassuming life of love he lived and asks of all. It is hoped that such may find profit in the perusal of these pages.

F. S. A.

September, 1895.



Truth is the highest thing that man may keep.  
—CHAUCER.

We know the truth, not only by the reason, but also by the heart.—PASCAL.

The Holy of Holies was left empty to teach thee, O Israel, that no place containeth the Eternal One, but thine heart is his sanctuary.—HILLEL.

Christianity is not a theory or a speculation, but a life;—not a philosophy of life, but a life and a living process.—COLERIDGE.

I am sure that when the listening repose of the multitude was broken as the sermon closed, and, like a melted stream, the crowd flowed away into the city, the people carried something more with them than a handful of good precepts. \* \* \* They had been taught that they were God's children. \* \* \* Duty, the thing they ought to do, had shone for them that morning at once with its own essential sweetness and with the illumination of the Father's will. No wonder that as they walked together they said to one another: "He speaks to us with authority."—PHILLIPS BROOKS.

He would enter our humanity, and would converse with us through the lips of his perfect Son, that his own thoughts might become audible to us in a human voice; would show in a person like ourselves, in a life like our own, that true image of himself which every child of His was created to bear. By every possible method, He would keep our visible existence filled and flooded with His invisible Life, so that we should never make the mistake of thinking that our home is in this outer world, while we really belong to Him and are heirs of His unseen Kingdom.—LUCY LARCOM.

Human society is one day to be governed, not by those clumsy discriminations of intellectual justice, not by those rudimentary laws which are the best that the present condition of human knowledge will

allow: the day is coming when that government which stands most perfect yet in the world—the government of love, administered by father and mother, over as many children as they can take care of—is to be, in the increase of human wisdom and human love, the government of states. It would be folly to rush into it just yet—as foolish as it was for David to take on Saul's armor, which rattled about him; but when, by the evolution and the growth of ages, the world comes to a condition in which it has the material for a government of love, the administration of that government will have a place and will have a power of which we have now but little suspicion.—HENRY WARD BEECHER.

Would you see Him as he is? You cannot see Him through chinks of ceremonialism; or through the blind eyes of erring man; or by images graven with art and man's device; or in cunningly devised fables of artificial and perverted theology. Nay, but seek Him in His own word; seek Him in loving lives; seek Him in sincere hearts, washed clean from traditional misrepresentations; seek Him in the revelation of Himself, which He gives to all who, by walking in His ways, see His face, and have His name written in their foreheads.—FARRAR.



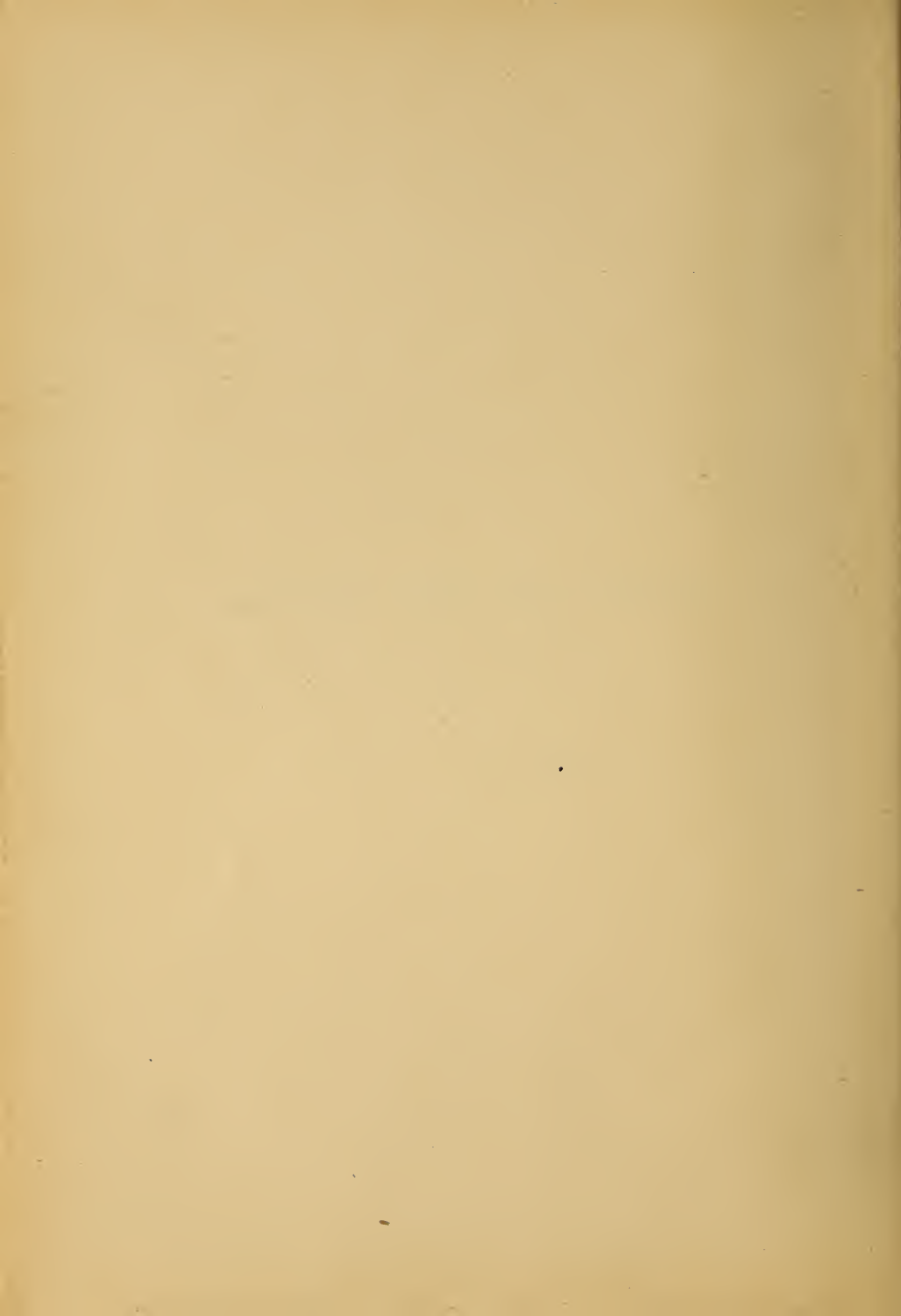
# CONTENTS.

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	Page
TRUTH AND ITS TEACHER .....	15
THE POOR IN SPIRIT.....	37
THE MOURNERS.....	55
THE MEEK.....	71
HUNGERING AND THIRSTING.....	87
THE MERCIFUL .....	103
HEART PURITY .....	119
PEACE AND ITS BLESSINGS.....	135
PERSECUTION AND ITS REWARD.....	151
THE LAW OF ACCUMULATION.....	167
GAIN FROM LOSS .....	183
LAWS OF INFLUENCE .....	199



**TRUTH AND ITS TEACHER.**



## TRUTH AND ITS TEACHER.

And he opened his mouth, and taught them, saying, Blessed—— Matt. v. 2, 3.

### I

For eighteen months the wise Carpenter of Nazareth had been attracting the attention of the Hebrew people. He had taught and healed in Judea and Galilee, and made Genesaret and the Jordan evermore sacred by scenes enacted beside their waters. The twelve had been chosen to the high office of apostleship, that they might be the media of the manifestations of their Lord's power and glory; and the wider dissemination of his teachings. Now on the side of some grass-covered mountain the Great Teacher seats himself to speak to the attending throng, as did the prophets in days of which the Jew could speak with flashing eye. Here beneath the "cloudless Syrian sky," while a listening multitude

hung upon his words, the Magna Charta of the Christian faith was given and Jesus of Nazareth began a new era in his public career.

With the preaching of the sermon on the mount our Lord declared an advance beyond the old forms and faiths. While not one jot or tittle of the law should fail, and while he came not to destroy but to fulfill, the time of the outgrown dispensation was at an end, and all things were become new. He found the rabbis locked in their belief in a temporal kingdom clothed in temporal dress. So far he had not attempted publicly to overthrow the popular belief. The time was now come when there must be an open declaration of the doctrines of the new dispensation. Another regime had begun, and the popular mind must be apprised of the wide distinction between substance and type. The two were related, and in the great plan of God were parts of the same purpose. But the type is not permanent; man cannot always be a boy, nor day-time be all dawn. Preparation must give place to that for which preparation is made.

The two must be compared in the minds of the people, and the death knell sounded for the one and the authority of the other declared. It was the hour of official enunciation of the gospel dispensation.

It was something to set men thinking.

The fault of the times was the lack of independence and originality. None either cared or dared to utter the new. Scribe quoted rabbi and the people the priest until it had become an age of repetitions and citation of authorities. Christ spake for himself.

Beware of an age of quotations. Then thought is awry and truth goes to the rack. We cannot believe that the time will ever come in God's eternity when all has been said that can be said. Give us an age when men modestly differ and boldly maintain, and we will think it God's dispensation. But woe to us when we think the sun has sunk the deeper the yellower grows the lore. Beloved and blessed be the names of our great teachers from Polycarp to Luther and Calvin, but these were only lords among thinkers, not gods over

thought. As for us we, too, live in God's ever-breaking day, and for all time to come the Holy Spirit will be showing the things of Christ unto his own.

To-day ought to be larger than yesterday, ought to reach higher, find new worlds and start pendulums in other spheres. And it will be if ears are not too dull to hear the message from mount and sea where the Son of God lifted up his voice. It is the power as well as the charm of the doctrines of the Great Teacher that they seem to advance as we advance. But let us not think that because we have learned a little of the expansive power of revealed truth we must throw the past overboard. All truth is of a piece with itself, old and new alike. Christ's fulfillment was not destruction. His truth was what had been known — plus. Real progress is the power to add. Development is of its own kind. As the world is able it will receive. God measures his times by man's capacity. In due season there comes prophet, Christ or Spirit.



The beatitudes are not prescriptions, nor the sermon on the mount a collection of set rules, requiring to be lived up to narrowly, and altogether to be dispensed with as soon as outgrown, a fate which most exact requirements • have to look forward to. All Christ's teaching was suggestive, adjustable, inspiring. It was given with the view of fitting widely different natures and exceedingly unequal times. At present it is impossible to conceive of circumstances to which these sayings will not apply. It is because they have sometimes been thought of as rigid, and narrow, and frigid, that new applications of them to the new requirements about us seem like other doctrines which are taking the place of the old.

As we all grow wiser together we shall see how great the Father's love is, how wise his laws are, and the absolute inexhaustibleness of the truth of the Great Teacher.

It was because Christ spoke to humanity, not alone to a Nicodemus, or a Jew, or a first century, that what he said lives on and on. Accustomed as we are to lay stress on

that which is done for the individual as the greatest incentive to duty, it may be questioned if a stronger appeal to the average mind is not on the ground of its near relation with the great human family. The vision becomes impressive as one sees how much more than his individual self is involved; because the law of his life, his happiness, his destiny, binds him to all others, so that theirs is his, and his is theirs.

It is the sweep of revealed truth as well as its directness that gives power with the person. When this glowing metal "finds its way into every crevice of the human mould, then we know the one was made for the other. When God's voice starts into vibration every string of my nature, then I know it is God's voice. And so Christ laid his finger on the hearts about him—the shepherds, the housewives, the fathers, men who sowed and reaped, and toiled in vineyards, and fished in waters, and made feasts, and attended weddings, and showed them that his truth was their truth. Revelation is not a set of orders issued as by

a captain or pilot on the deck of a ship; it is the Spirit taking the things of Christ and showing them unto us; it is the appeal of the divine mind to the human, on the basis that the one is the image of the other.”\*

## II.

All the beatitudes grew out of common-places. A beggar, a bier, a braggart, a lunch, a bit of cruelty, a washing of the hands, a quarrel, an expression of tyranny, might have been texts of the octave of blessing.

Jesús never employed what was strained or high-sounding. His appeal was, “Believe me for the very works’ sake, for truth’s sake.” He assumed little. Himself was the soul of simplicity.

We of to-day are afraid of the commonplace. We look too much to novelty and show. Some of us would be greater if we could break with the prescriptive. There is much talk of servitude to creed, but few touch on the much worse error of servitude to custom. Custom is the genus and includes creed, manners, dress, language, books and art.

\*Munger’s “Appeal to Life.”

There have been great men because some right minds have refused to obey custom, not alone one of the departments over which custom holds rule. We shall all be great when the voice within is more to us than sights and sounds without.

“We pray to be conventional,” says Emerson, “but the wary heaven takes care you shall not be if there is anything good in you.” Everyone of us does violence to his nature because the few we have met have different practices from ourselves. By and by we come to see that their way—the way we have aped—was not the best way. We feel that what was within us at first was the call of divinity. Our sin was the choice and service of custom, rather than that of God.

Conformity is either vice or virtue, master or slave, as we make it; and Jesus subscribed to custom or refused it, according to the wisdom we marvel at. To Cæsar he rendered the things of Cæsar, to God the things that were God’s. The church will not arrive at the fulfillment of her mission until in some meas-

ure she has the spirit of discernment. At present custom holds greater sway, it is to be feared and confessed, than conscience, and the way of the world is becoming daily the way of the church.

While Christians will indulge in good things to extravagance; while formalism is more prominent than devotion; while novelty has greater charm than truth; while ambition is licensed and practiced to an almost unlimited extent; while the rich are favored and the poor stared at; while amusement has greater attraction than instruction; while selfishness in the church is so like selfishness in the world, that each expends its millions in beautifying the house its bejeweled devotees are entertained in; while Christianity gets no nearer the simple, unfretted life of its Master, we cannot expect the fulfillment of the beatitudes, nor the measure of power so many wonder does not come.

We must bring life back to Jesus and the plain truth he taught. Such is its transforming power that no hardened nature can

gaze on it long and earnestly without being softened, and no bruised nature can behold it and feel no touch of healing. All there is of wisdom in the Proverbs, all there is of tenderness in the Psalms, all there is of beauty in the Prophets, all there is of logic in the Epistles, all there is of mystery in the Revelation, is centered in that life that broke like sunshine over a world's midnight. The church more than once has been lost in the labyrinths of theology; but no simple-hearted yeoman ever missed his way with Christ for guide. The life and teachings of Jesus have been the world's north star. However far men may have swung from the truth, the honest inquirer always returns by the power of a divine gravitation. "Your Master did not so," is the most cutting rebuke the wise world can give.

### III.

Everything Jesus said was so good that repetition did not wear it out. There was something impressive in his reiteration. It comes to us like music when we hear him say, "Blessed," "Blessed," in every tone of an

octave of virtues that would harmonize all life to-day, if the din were not so great that many have become deaf to such sounds. But having ears they hear not.

Now, "blessed" may also, and perhaps better, be translated "happy," so that Jesus may be said to have begun his public ministry with the reiteration of "Happy," "Happy," "Happy." That was the Christ of it. He had come to make men happy. He had sacrificed for it. If his mission was not the bringing of happiness it was nothing. He had come to lift up, to comfort, to fill, to show the Father. "Rejoice," said he, "for even your persecution shall bring you joy." Here was the keynote of his life and teachings. He did not come to reprove and rebuke, he did not even come to make men righteous, but to make them what righteousness would lead them to be, that is, happy. The law was only a schoolmaster to bring to Christ, and righteousness is the means to happiness both in this life and the next.

God has taken the pains to show that the object of man's existence, so far as man is



concerned, is to be happy. And that is just what Jesus held up to view from the beginning of his ministry. He did not wish to pose as the enemy of the deepest craving of the nature, to play the critic, to aggravate those he would win, to make them feel the immense distance between them. He thought it wiser to admit the truth from the first, and tell them plainly that what he sought was to make them just what they wanted to be. He would introduce himself as a friend of their wounded feelings and their hearts' desires. Therefore he began to speak in beatitudes, and to hold up the good and beckon to it, before he began to rebuke the wrong.

And that brings us to the real mission of Jesus' life and preaching. It was to teach men that the way to happiness was by righteousness. That was the relation of the two. He came to give himself that men might have life and have it more abundantly. Therefore it is said that his believers are created in him unto good works. There is an inseparableness about these two that is closely woven into the texture



of the soul and its environment, so deeply stamped upon the face of all things that nothing can possibly change it. When we have the key to this interpretation it is easy enough to trace the truth everywhere. Christ came to bring the key.

But we must not interpret this grossly. As Jesus taught he made no technical distinctions; he left that to us. And we are able to discern two qualities in the happiness that righteousness brings with it: Good it is to enjoy the pleasures that arise from a society governed by the moral teachings of the sermon on the mount; but more than that is the refined pleasure, amounting to blessedness, that comes from the doing of right because it is right, it being settled already that right leads to good, but forgotten because the right is found to be so good itself. That is, the means itself becomes an end. Righteousness is happiness, and the search for the thing itself ceases when it is found that it comes all wrapped up in what promises to be only the means to an end. God has been just that careful to encourage us on the

way. Moral happiness is as much beyond mental pleasure, as mental pleasure is beyond sensual enjoyment. And Jesus led his listeners to this knowledge as gently as the clouds rift; led them to what they all longed for; led them back to a knowledge of the Father's plan for them.

Hitherto they had looked to conquest, mirth, wealth, lust, revenge for their sovereign good. But of these the Great Teacher said, "No." He approved of their longing for happiness—how could they be otherwise when they were created so—but he directed them to a new way, unattractive in itself, but a certain way to all they craved. It was the way of righteousness, and he was that righteousness; therefore he afterward told them he was the Way.

And Christ's whole life was a fulfillment of his own instruction. It was his meat and his drink to do the will of the Father. And this is the ideal joy. There is nothing else to be compared with it. The true disciple of Christ, who has searched and found, into

whose heart the new spiritual life-blood has poured, who has learned the greatest of all the commandments—perfect love toward God and man—who has, like John, leaned on Jesus' bosom, this one will find it a constant delight simply to do the will of his Master. He need not wait for the next world for his joy; he will not even seek it in this life; but an instinct like that which leads animals to feed, and thus furnishes nutriment for the perpetuation of a healthy body, a like instinct, only a spiritual one, will lead to the doing of the divine will, here and now and all the time, which will bring the inevitable and inexpressible and ideal blessedness of the Christian life. As with those who hunger and thirst after righteousness the satisfaction is implied in the craving, so the ineffable delight of the Christian life is inseparable from the doing of what pleases the Father. "Whatever he would like to have me do"—no succinct expression of acceptable service is so comprehensive as that.

All this considered, how is it with us to-day? Taking the so-called Christian nations, our own

in the forefront, how much do we know of this octave of virtues and their blessings? There has been enough time to try the cause and prove the effect. We are called a happy people. Indeed! Distracted every year with the war between capital and labor! A people vexed and wearied over the questions not only of how to provide raiment, but how to get the latest style of cut and make-up, until life becomes a question of "How shall we dress?" A people contesting for preferment in social and political circles, mad with the frenzy of desire for display of beauty, knowledge, wit, silks, diamonds and degrees! If we were not drunk with excitement we should be sick with despair. The immense contrast between living according to the simplicity of the doctrine of Jesus and the strained conditions of an "age of progress," readily adapted and acquiesced in by the sworn followers of the unassuming Nazarene, would be rare material for a farce alive with irony, and sarcasm sharper than any two-edged sword. It was life as Jesus prescribed it that he pronounced blessed.

Compare the beatitudes and the times. Evidently they are out of joint with each other. Jesus declared the poor in spirit and the meek to be happy. But when in the world's history has discontent been rifer or ambition more unrestrained than now—NOW—when men are wondering why the Lord so long delays his coming to reward his servants. "Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after righteousness." But Church and World have gone off together after the forbidden fruit of gain and glory to glut the maw of vanity. "Happy are the merciful and the peacemakers." Like monopolies and heresy hunters! Social, religious, and private life are disturbed and distracted with the new conditions around us. Men cry, Peace, Peace; but there is no peace.

Conditions like those of to-day must be met and righted by something wholly unlike anything that characterizes the times. Jesus spoke of the abiding laws of human nature as related to the government of God. Society must be brought to this. It is not enough that millions are spent every year in the evangeliza-

tion of the world. It takes more than millions to do that. Elaborate attempts have been made to "reach the masses," but like the slough of despond in Pilgrim's Progress, all that has ever been put into this work has been swallowed up, for there is no bottom to it. The millions have been put into machinery, but the world is never to be brought into the happiness of Christ by machinery. Machinery, I do not say system. The proposed plan to build in Cleveland a mammoth temple that shall surpass the theaters in beauty, equipped with brilliant electric displays, famous paintings and entrancing music, will not go far to convince the masses of the great truth Christ first declared to his disciples that the only way to happiness is through righteousness. If these means could bring to happiness or even an adequate knowledge of the way to it, they would have done it long ago. There have been sermons enough and prayer meetings enough ; and there have been too many creeds and too much "orthodoxy." In the midst of it all men are miserable. Something more vital than money

or method is needed to bring the restless, longing, sin-sick multitude into the happiness they blindly seek, into the blessedness their Lord spoke of. It will not come through the inventions of genius, or through benevolence and piety that come as a make-shift gotten up by consciences worn callous with the knowledge of neglect, or through the evolution of germ good in human kind that simply needs developing. Society and all its institutions are at fault at the center, and must be reconstructed and readjusted throughout. We shall not be happy in any true sense until we are relieved of the causes which unsettle. There must be a return to the simplicity and purity of life as enjoined in the beatitudes, defined more exactly in the process of the sermon on the mount, and adequately presented in the perfect life and character of Jesus of Nazareth. Here and there a soul has succeeded in loosing itself from its trammels, and getting into the conditions that make peace and happiness ; it is only few who can. Society needs to be taught that the progress of science and an age



of invention, while it may sparkle with the luster of a diamond, is as cold as a stone in the satisfying of the longings of the nature.

It is something old and forgotten we need, but something eternally true. Bring us to-day, O Christ, to the warmth of thy heart and the truth of thy life, that we may get thy joy.



**THE FIRST BEATITUDE.**



## THE POOR IN SPIRIT.

Blessed are the poor in spirit: for their's is the kingdom of heaven.—Matt v. 3.

It is not strange that the first recorded words of our Lord should not only stand in distinction from the old beliefs, but should mark and characterize the life of the Speaker. From first to last our Saviour's earthly career was one of humility and disinterested service. The very fact of the Word made flesh and dwelling among men was a condescension so great as sometimes to produce the effect of a tale that is told. With consciousness of unlimited power he became subject to human laws and bounded his life with helplessness. Though the riches of the universe were his, yet for our sakes he became poor, that he might fulfil the desire of his spirit and win the world to righteousness and himself.

Here is but an example of the relation of

Christ's work and teaching. The deed was larger than the word. Never did Jesus enjoin the unnatural or the impossible. All that he said was only the phrasing of the pantomime he daily enacted in Palestine. He was himself the substance; his teachings were the shadow. Powerful as was his speech, it was but an echo. "Blessed are the poor in spirit" would lose much of its significance if the speaker himself had not endorsed it with thirty-three years of practice. However beautiful the beatitude may be, it is made a thousand times more beautiful by the first and only complete demonstration of it.

Here is one of the simplest, deepest, sublimest of all Christian virtues. It deals with nothing exterior but goes straight inward, and asks, How is the soul toward God? We learn that estimates of self-worth must be made by the standard of perfection. When Jesus answered the rich young man, "Why callest thou me good? There is none good but one, that is God," he would establish a standard—the standard—by which goodness should be meas-

ured. And if goodness, then knowledge and all things. Jesus would have us know that we know nothing, are nothing, except we be measured by the divine scale. Perfect righteousness, perfect knowledge, perfect love are found only in One, that is, the Unit of the universe. All else is but a fraction. Who knows anything? It is the millionth part of the knowable. So is the best we have or are. There is but One, and when Jesus lifted up that standard of measurement, self-estimates went to the wall. Sooner or later all men must learn to measure by the divine standard. Blessed, said Jesus, are those who learn it in this life, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. They can feel no pride when they see so much beyond, as beggars feel their rags the more in presence of royalty. One must see how great God is before he can know how little self is. And that is humility, the first step into truth's light, the badge of entrance into the kingdom. Pride is fiction and truth gives it the lie. To bemoan our best as but the fringe of the possible, is counted a virtue. Who does that at least sees God through

the mists; he has laid hold of the Infinite with one hand. Happy is such a man! He has already entered into the heart of the universe. He is through running errands.

Do not misunderstand me at this point. A false humility has so often been preached that most minds are befogged. Instead of a charming Christian virtue it has been made to mean abject servility. But that is because it has been thought of out of proportion, only on one side. That is, instead of taking bearings with reference to God, we have been taught to calculate our latitude and longitude from human data. We have been told that we must "look with a holy contempt on ourselves, must value others and undervalue ourselves in comparison with others." But God never asks us to be foolish. He never intended that we should deceive ourselves, or rate ourselves as anything but what we are. Christianity and reason are in harmony, and the pity is that they are ever made to seem out of harmony. Let us forever get away from the idea that humility means the degradation of dignity—the sale of

a God-given place among men for the pottage of a nominal righteousness.

The first characteristic in the truly poor in spirit is that he reckons all things in the account, and in the soul's invoice values everything in its relations.

There is such a thing as a laudable self-gratulation. One cannot be oblivious to what he has done; to deny it would be a lie. Jesus himself spake with the authority of conscious power and not as the scribes. Moses and Paul taught as superiors. A supremacy is a good thing to have. To be a superior is to have a power. Who is so low in the scale of intellect, morals or heart but that in something he surpasses another? Even to have the consciousness of power over self, a supremacy of the man over impulse—that much, at least, must go before humility. To be the abject inferior of everyone, to pass an apologetic existence, is simply to be unworthy regard from God or man.

Therefore seek a supremacy. If you can be great, be so. When God and conscience

Speak, listen. What message they give will lend to moral height. Tower among men if you can, and do not foolishly deny the elevation. Above all things have a moral worth and a consciousness of it. If right, never apologize. What conviction or talent God gave must never go under the bushel of false modesty. Exhibit no gift and deny no power. Our possessions men will find, and there is no need of personal expositions of mental and moral wares, tabulated and conspicuously arranged. Let us be what we seem; let us seem what we are. Heaven gave gifts to men, and no mortal need be ashamed to be found in their possession. If I am worth anything I cannot keep it to myself. If others find it out, let me not be so foolish as to deny it. No life is made character-tight; there is a leak in every existence. In self-estimates we ought to be honest. If one can do anything, let him give himself credit. It was Mr. Moody who said, after wide experience, that God never made great use of a man who did not know enough to appreciate himself.



Such conceptions as these are the groundwork on which rests a truly humble attitude toward men. Otherwise man is servile or obsequious.

But the preceding all leads up to this—not valuing our own supremacy so highly it cannot be sacrificed for the good of others; for this is the spirit of the kingdom. Poverty in spirit, when it looks man-ward, is a lending of conscious worth and dignity to others' needs. It is a holding of the best powers as not too good to be used in lowly service. It means leaving the heights to help in the valleys. Shame to the man who has talents too high to be spent on the commonest of his fellows. Down with that self-estimation that refuses to yield itself servant to need. What honor has he who honors no other? If he will deign no help his inferior will give no praise. Blessings come from lowly lips, and peans rise; they never come from above. The sweetest notes we hear are those we bend to catch.

Let us not mind soiling superiority with ordinary uses. If God has given me a voice

for an oratorio I have no right to fence it off from a cottage prayer-meeting. This is not sacrificing dignity, but bending it to use. It will find its place again, as water rises to its own level. Everything finds its proper height. Worth will not down. Princes keep their princely bearings, even when clothed in rags; so menial service to our fellow man will not disguise a royal soul. Magnificent character cannot be buried beneath lowly service, and worth is worth in spite of humble sacrifice, as Christ is God in spite of manger, cross and tomb.

But all this is a view on one side, and has no value beyond that. It is simply an analysis of this Christian virtue in relation to man, and that is as far as current thought generally goes. But to go no further in the present case is to curtail the thought—that of human inferiority and divine superiority.

“For merit lives from man to man,  
And not, O Lord, from man to thee.”

With the poor in spirit there will be no satisfaction in eminence in this world. The child

of God will be God's child, and not the world's. He will count greatness on earth for what it is worth; he will feel that the best is little enough. As he looks into his Father's fathomless power and boundless love, he will turn from honors, and ask, What are they? He will do his best here, make the most of himself, help his fellows as he can; but what, he asks, is the superiority of one grasshopper over another? Therefore, he seeks pre-eminence, not for its own sake, but for good's sake. He would rise, not that he might out-distance men, but that he might come nearer God. He takes less pleasure in men's praise; God's praise only is worth caring for. Every consideration is secondary to distance and direction from him. Good it is to be great, but the poor in spirit declares, There is but One good, there is but One great; and asks, What is man that Thou art mindful of him? Therefore he is wise who counts that as nothing, since it is so far from God.

And all must remember, too, that there is Somewhat in every one that is above and other

than himself. Each must acknowledge his inspiration. Whatever success comes let us say, "It is the will of God," and be thankful. As we feel our distance, we must also feel our dependence. Twice we must feel small at success: First, because it is so little; and, second, because the little that we did is borrowed gain. No power is ours. Yesterday we were strong, but to-day we think it a dream. To-morrow will be better than all. The inspiration overshadows us as a cloud, and a divine voice speaks. That which moves is not myself. I only respond. Hence we must magnify the ego less, and acknowledge the work of the divine. Whatever there is of success in life we owe to a power above ourselves. Said a lady to a clergyman, "Mr. McC., I thank you for your sermon." "Thank the Lord, madam, thank the Lord," was the blunt but humble reply. That man was poor in spirit.

To one who has laid hold on Truth, all things bear its image; as one looking for a moment at the sun sees the round glow wherever he looks. You cannot think God's thoughts

and not put their impress on whatever you touch. You will begin to measure with his mile-stick, even though you 'may not be an adept at it. You will feel an inestimable greatness in all he does. The human element will subside into the absorptive power of the divine. Where is the wise? Where is the great? Hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world by teaching a new comparison? Measuring themselves by themselves, and comparing themselves among themselves, men cease to be wise. It is only in comparing spiritual things with spiritual that truth is found. "Not unto us, not unto us," breaks from everyone who has learned the source of wisdom. He counts God as the one from whom all blessings flow. He speaks a perpetual doxology. He can no longer understand how flesh-clad beings can glory in divine presence, and joins with one who wrote, "He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord."

Now, with all this in mind, it is not at all difficult to see why the poor in spirit are blessed. It is because theirs is the kingdom

of heaven. That is, they have that mind which makes heaven, which is heaven wherever the mind is. The elements of happiness are there. Happiness does not depend on rank and honor, but on the man. How he is toward all things will settle it how all things will be to him. If his estate is within himself, it cannot be taken from him. No robber can make him poorer, no attorney defraud him at law, no fluctuation in values impoverish him. He is a prince, heir of the kingdom of heaven.

And one of the characteristics of that kingdom is peace, one among the last of Christ's bequests before he left earth. But who but the poor in spirit can possess that? The peace of the kingdom, given not as the world giveth, cannot come to hearts not enlarged by celestial thoughts. How is it with us? When you and I realize that the only price that the god of this world pays is at the cost of peace, we know we have not gained, but lost. We feel how poor it is. But it takes a God's child to realize the poverty. Amidst distractions, such must break forth in the longing—

“Jesus, lover of my soul,  
Let me to thy bosom fly.”

That rest that is promised to the weary and heavy laden enters largely into the blessedness of the kingdom. It pervades the heart; it enters and lifts it above the storm-line; makes one feel that he does not have to wait for heaven until he dies; he can take it with him.

And that is the Christian's boon in this life—portable bliss. The better grasp he gets on God's eternal truth, the less he will fret and worry. Our trouble is that we are too ambitious; ambitious of rising, of appearing well, of acquiring reputations in different lines, of outstripping one another, of praise or wealth, or any of a thousand things that keep us always stirred up and distressed. Ambition is in one sense a curse. People become inordinately desirous of attaining or possessing what will place them at an advantage over their fellows, without stopping to ask what about heaven's approval. That is, they take hold at the wrong end. The motive is sordid and commonplace, and is of the earth earthy. Every power is racked to make

a success before men, and even if it comes, it is dearly bought; but more attempts are failures, and then comes disappointment. It is ambition that drives to frenzy, and God pity the multitude of poor, distracted souls. When we get that contentment, which, with godliness, is great gain, it is when we have learned to take heaven's view of life, and have ceased to be rivals with one another, preferring rather to work humbly at the works of righteousness for Christ's sake and the gospel's, than to enter into contests with our fellows for supremacy's sake. Then we shall be less tossed about. The heart will be where the treasure is, and the thought will be concerned about spiritual success, more than about success in earth's comparative trifles. Happy the poor in spirit ! It troubles him not that he cannot sit with the mighty ones here, since God lets him learn at his feet.

Another characteristic of the kingdom is simplicity. What is more expressive of an unburdened mind than abandonment of spirit ! There is so much of art among us, such an ex-



ertion to be natural, that we feel anything but natural. It was of the artless child that Christ said, "Of such is the kingdom of heaven." Our constraint is self-brought. We bind ourselves with the cords of conventionality, and then wonder we do not feel free. When we give place to simplicity, it is place for the kingdom, place for blessedness. Nature would put us at ease if we would give room to it, for that is nothing more or less than adjustment to the laws of the universe, laws we profess to admire, but will not submit to. Childhood is near to nature, for it has dropped fresh from the good hand of God; and the happiness and charm of childhood is freedom from constraint. Neither the child nor the poor in spirit is concerned with forms. They are happy in the employment of finding their fitting-places into God's great world of mind and heart. That is not only happiness, but true happiness. To them self is not the center of thought and the burden of life. Selfishness is unhappiness; hence forgetting self is happiness, for "the man who does not house

self has room for his ideal self—God's eternal idea of him."

Happy the poor in spirit ! In him the promise is fulfilled continually; his own condition is its fulfillment. As soon as he knows he can do nothing, then he knows he can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth him. He belongs to the great multitude who out of weakness were made strong. Therefore let him glory in infirmities and want, since then the power of God rests upon him. Need is for One, and only One; all else is fancy, delusion. And as uncertainty proves to be earth's only certainty, and the clamor of vanity ceases, the music of the evening song is sweet to hear:

" Swift to its close ebbs out life's little day;  
Earth's joys grow dim; its glories pass away;  
Change and decay in all around I see;  
O Thou who changest not ! abide with me."

**THE SECOND BEATITUDE.**



## THE MOURNERS.

Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted.—Matt. v. 4.

I suppose we shall find the text comprehensible when we know just what the word “mourn” means. Possibly the beatitude was suggested by the sight of a bier and funeral procession or other demonstration of bereavement. In the ordinary course of things love had suffered loss, and there was mourning. From what we know of his nature, Christ must have been moved with compassion; and possibly he spoke so as to be heard by the bereaved, giving them in this way a passing benediction.

But the words were rather meant for the great throng of listeners. Here is at least a suggestion of the significance attaching. The listeners were tearless. Either they had lost no friends or time had healed their wounds,

for there they stood, attentive to the wise Teacher. But there is other mourning than for the dead, for hearts are broken in more ways than by the loss of friends. Half the world's groans are smothered. Death of hope is as heart-rending sometimes as the death of the loved, but it cannot be explained as well; people cannot understand; one must suffer to himself and out of sight. We can demand bright faces and a careless air of one another, but we cannot regulate bitterness of heart. The under current is stronger than the upper current. In the world of feeling many a voice would cry out if it were not gagged.

But out of all this we are warranted, by the uniform character of the beatitudes, in saying that Jesus referred to what we may call spiritual mourning, if that does not sound strained. Our Lord was not at that time preaching on what pertains to the world. The whole of the sermon on the mount is spiritual in its aspect and import, and the Preacher saw here a living illustration of a profound spiritual truth. He would speak a word for those whose inner life

was rent; for us of to-day as well as for them. How is it with us? Humanity's story is ever the same. We are tempted, we sin. As now, so then. Men always have and still do divide themselves into two classes. Their own attitude to sin puts the class badge on. Indifference on the one hand, and grief on the other, index the whole man. Do not think by grief for sin, I mean conscience—conscience chides for disobedience; or regret—regret may be discomfort at unsuccessful sin; or remorse—that is conscience turned sour; or fear—there is no mourning in that; for fear's mission is to create respect, and respect, confidence, and confidence, love. We need to know God otherwise; and I venture it as a truth that there can be no spiritual mourning until one sees himself as having grieved God's love. When they wake up to that the very stones will cry out. When we come to know that sin not only hurts us but hurts God, then it hurts us the more. Only the heartless can see pain without feeling pain. If it makes you shut your eyes to see some thoughtless boy tear off a fly's wings, how

much more will it wound you to see Our Heavenly Father tortured by his creatures? I do not pretend to say how the Infinite can suffer—that is a question for the schools. But there can be no mistake as to the meaning of “grieving the Spirit,” and “crucifying to ourselves the Son of God afresh.” And neither can it be a question that the one thing that grieves God is alienation from him. God is love, and love’s grievance is that it is slighted. Everything can be overlooked but that, but that can brook no slight. Therefore not to love God perfectly is to wound him; and how can one wound God and not sorrow for it? The soul asleep knows nothing of it. Once awake it responds with mourning; echoes God’s sigh; feels his pain.

If all men could only be brought to know the tenderness of the great heart of God, human nature would break down in a universal lamentation. But we do not see it very plainly. So long has it been told us that we must flee to God or perish in sin, that we have conceived of salvation as mechanical on God’s part,



where he stands, ledger in hand, to check off the saved and the lost with no more feeling than a stockman at the scales takes account of the weight of beeves. We have learned to think of him as Judge, rather than as Father. We have too often taken Christ's statement to his disciples, given as an incentive to zeal, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved, but he that believeth not shall be damned," for a threat to hang over men's heads to drive them into the kingdom. That is not a true picture of Christ. A better one is where his heart fills his eyes with tears and his tongue with words of mourning over his people's rejected love. It shows that his attitude is not like Shylock's; that he does not judge according to Blackstone. We call ourselves of the divine image, and then go away and never think that if there is anything in us that is like God, then there must be something in God that is like us. If our nature, that is corrupt, loves and grieves because its love is not returned, then the divine nature, which is love itself, how must that

love, and how must it grieve when its love is not returned? Before all things else we need to pray that men may have a true idea of who God is. We have had theological definitions enough; what we need is to know him as he is. We have not appreciated his attitude toward sin. It has seemed to us that he could not endure it, that he turned away in abhorrence. Not yet has it come clearly to us that sin is not only a violation of God's will as law, but it is a wounding of his nature. Rather than say we break his commandments we should say we break his heart. That is the deeper truth. And if it were thought of in that way there would be more sorrow for sin. If the world could see God weep for its sins, and know that it was God, it would melt stones.

Whenever men have had this view of the way God looks on what we call sin, there has been great depression. In the place of indifference there has been deepest concern. It becomes a personal and pointed thing. "I, I have hurt my Heavenly Father; he weeps for me." When one realizes that, he mourns. But because

there has been so little sympathy with God, therefore there has been little thought of infidelity to God. Levity has always been widespread. To most, every sin indulged is so much clear gain; they have out-distanced the Almighty. Do we know what levity in sin means? It means that one has not yet learned the letters of divine nature and the relation of human nature to it. Otherwise he would see what human nature cannot withstand—sorrow for slighted love—and he, too, must pause, and think, and mourn.

So Jesus would point a double moral in his beatitude; one for the thoughtful and one for the thoughtless. If mourning is good, then not to mourn is not good. And so Christ's words are "fitted to insinuate into the minds of all that life is a solemnity, and that the mirth which is allied to madness is the saddest of moral anomalies."

Is there, then, virtue in spiritual mourning? This lies on the border of the two statements, "Blessed are they that mourn," and "They shall be comforted." It is the link of connection.

Now mourning does not save. Jesus did not say, "Blessed are they because they mourn." Not the fact of mourning, but the condition of mind that leads to it, is signal. It indicates a mind merging into God's. There is always that back of everything overt that is more than the thing itself. The broken and contrite heart that David speaks of is one that has already gained a peep of light; it has begun to think God's thoughts after him; feels an inexpressible something which is voiced with cries. Mourning does not come at will; it is the expression of the nature undergoing transformation.

Therefore the promise of comfort is to those who are in a certain state of mind. It is nothing more or less than a getting at the fundamental self, and that is what we are to be saved from. God does not save us from punishment, but from ourselves. Strictly speaking, he does not save us from sin, for what is sin but discord? All God's creation is good and we are persuaded with Paul that there is nothing unclean in itself. To the pure all

things are pure. If we want to find sin, we must find it in our own misconception of truth; in our misuse of power and privilege. You cannot tell me where sin is; I can only doubt it. When you localize it you have only placed its shadow. When they call out, Lo ! here is sin ! Lo ! there ! believe it not. Self is sin. The string of character is not stretched to accord with God's universe, or even with this world. It may give forth a sound according to the nature of impulse, but there will be no harmony. Yet both God and man are offended with discord, and there can be nothing but that while we are what we are. To make a new heaven and a new earth is not a work of reconstruction, but of regeneration. When God puts us right with universal environment there will be no discord, that is, no sin. He will simply save us from ourselves.

But the universal necessity is, that we be ourselves. I cannot escape from myself. I am one, yet dual. The waking of a new nature only opens my eyes to the fact that I am a unit composed of two varying fractions. There

can be no conflict in an individual self, where all is for God and good. But none of us has experienced that self. We have only become familiar with the law that when we would do good, evil is present with us, and the great unspoken cry is, How escape from self? How get rid of what is a part of me? We run from evil, but self is evil, and we cannot cut loose from that. Hence the continual conflict that rages, and the sighs we must sigh, and the groans we must stifle. Occasionally there escapes the lips of one the lamentation, "Oh wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" but it is like the dull thud of a shrouded form slipping into the deep; life's waters close, and the surface is serene.

But just here is the blessedness. What rouses and pains is the Spirit of God implanted. As the divine indwelling wounds, so it will heal. Cause and cure are the same. The comfort is in this, that God has already given evidence that we shall be saved. It means everything: justification—comfort here;

glorification—comfort there. Is there more to ask? Who has it has all things, having promise of the life that now is and of that which is to come. Even now, here, I may have evidence of God's favor. I can rejoice that there is no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus. Each of us may claim for himself the privilege of our Father's world without demanding with the prodigal son, "Give me the portion of goods that falleth to me." Christ's "Peace I leave with you," was not to be deferred altogether to the future life for fulfillment. Its secret was for those whose hearts were knitting to the divine love; interlocking with divine tastes and truths. But what of the comfort of the by and by? Not in the restoration of the dead, not in retrieving fortunes, not in the privilege of future indulgence—not in any of these is the highest type of comfort that shall make up for earth's mourning, but in being admitted into God's confidence.

The love of knowledge in man is a magnificent evidence of his divine origin. From Eve



until now men have sought to find out the unknown, and their appeal has been made to serpents, and stars, and stones. But they have made this mistake—they have sought facts instead of truth, that by which we find out facts. God is a fact, but he is the greatest of all facts—truth. Everything that is must be known as it is connected with him, and if it is not known in that way it is not known. Nothing is isolated; nothing stands alone. All things are as they are because of the way in which they stand related to the Disposer. You cannot unravel God's universe unless you get hold of the thread of truth. Do not think to account for anything by its visible relations; these are secondary. Newspapers report that the fire was kindled by an incendiary; but the incendiary is bound by laws of thought and chains of influence to human kind; he acts from a human standpoint, (though we repudiate it in every-day language and call him inhuman), and to be human is to be intimately connected with God. Physicians report death by heart disease, but the germ



lay perhaps two generations ago in a mental state that has converted itself into a physical result. But our thoughts are after our kind, and our kind is in the image of God. Say what we will, our relation is first with the unseen, and we cannot explain the phenomena of life upon the mere basis of tangible fact. We seek to know why, but God is the Why of all things, and to know them we must know him.

Our fond dream is that on the other side of the blue we shall know as we are known. We are encouraged to believe that there will be placed in our hands the thread of Providence that shall unravel, one by one, life's tangles. We will learn how to read God's heiroglyphics. Believest thou that all things work together for good? They cannot unless there be one unifying, loving mind. When God's own enter into his Holy Place, and breathe the divine nature, which is the elixir of eternal life, that will be the completion of the transformation by the renewing of the mind. No questions there. Each for himself can find how circum-

stances, losses, blunders—all, work for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory. And at the Saviour's words to sin's distractions, "Peace, be still," there shall be a great calm.

And so the mourner's comfort is not alone the comfort of restoration, but the spiritual comfort of explanation, pure, deep, abiding. Jesus has not only brought life but immortality to light; and the promise does not rise full-orbed until we look afar into the unseen, with that faith whose victory overcomes the world, and through the gray mists thrust the sweet hope begotten by our blessed Lord that however fitful life's dream, its night however dark, its griefs however bitter, the morn will break when the Son of Righteousness shall rise, and life will melt into immortality as snowflakes softly sink into the bosom of the sea, and we shall be satisfied when we awake in his likeness.

**THE THIRD BEATITUDE.**



## THE MEEK.

Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth.—Matt. v. 5.

It is astonishing how God chooses the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty.

Who of us counts as God does? And yet when all is said and done we find God's count is always right. When Christ said that the poor in spirit were heirs of glory, men must have looked questions. And here is a contradiction as great as that. The meek, the calm, quiet, oppressed characters of earth shall become its proprietors and directors, its venerated chiefs. But how can that be? Here is a mystery, for it is always a mystery how a seeming contradiction can be true. But that is what God's government is to most of us—contradiction and mystery. It is not until we

get away from uninspired life, and cease looking at God with our eyes shut, that we come to know that truth, from the under side, always appears detached, and broken, and fragmentary; but that the under side of truth is not all. We trust that heaven will have its mission of reconciliation for us—the reconciliation of opposites, and extremes, and contradictions.

Now, the third beatitude is closely related to the first, and it is understood that some manuscripts place the beatitude for the meek just after the beatitude for the poor in spirit. In both in much the same general attitude, but they look principally in different directions. The poor in spirit are meek before God, and the meek are without ostentation before men. Therefore, one inherits heaven, and the other inherits earth. Kindred virtues bring kindred rewards.

What is meekness? It is patience, forbearance, submission, yielding; want of vanity, revenge, conceit, stubbornness; it is gentleness, mildness. But all these are divine touches. Will my nature prompt me to bow in rever-

ence, while another deigns not to uncover his head? Will it teach me to bide my time, to judge riper judgment than to-day pronounces? Not until God takes me into his school and bids me learn there. Not one of us inherits meekness as we inherit the power of language or clear vision. They who go from zone to zone of grace have learned to pick their way. They have had God's instruction. Meekness is acquired; otherwise it is not genuine. Nature prompts to retaliation; grace teaches a better way. It shows the futility of revenge. It points to Calvary, speaking of One, who when he was reviled, reviled not again. When they persecuted, he blessed.

So it is in the effort for place and gain. "For it is not in human nature to forego distinction and security without a pang." There is pleasure in homage, and none of us will see himself outstripped if he can help it. Paris may decide in favor of Aphrodite, but he must expect the hatred of Hera and Athena. But mythology is not gospel, and nature is not grace. The contour of human action is not

shapely until it has been fashioned by the divine hand. God would have us know that there is but one distinction that is honorable and abiding, and that is the distinction of sonship and heir-ship. He makes one grand difference among men, and declares that the dividing line is that which distinguishes righteousness from unrighteousness. They who have gone far enough in the way that leads upward, have learned not to become unduly agitated in the pursuit of honor. What gain if one gains? What loss if he loses? As calmly as any philosopher ever said, "I am a Stoic," he can say, "I am a Christian."

We must not mistake weakness for meekness. "Meekness is that strength of will—that will-power—which comes from trust in the living God." It is not rampant, because power never is. It is unruffled, because it is conscious of strength. The witless may laugh vacantly at insults, and schemers pass them by out of policy; but meekness is not the property of fools or knaves. We must look inside for that, expecting it to be a quality of character,



not a covering and trapping. We must not think that perfume is a flower because the rose we plucked smells sweet. Semblance of exterior proves nothing. My friend may have black eyes, but all who have black eyes are not my friends. Some culprits at the bar are silent; the timid are voiceless before strangers; but it does not follow that the speechless are either guilty or bashful. Christ was never more imposing than when he answered them never a word. The meek are patient under abuse, because they are so much higher than the abuses; they can see over hills and down valleys; can look into laws, and effects, and eternities, and know the end of it all. They ask concerning resentment, "What profit?" and bow the head.

It is thus that the meek have learned respect for the Great Conditions of life and happiness. There is a pliancy in conduct that is born of wisdom. Principle, not application is inflexible; the inward state, not the outward act. Duty says, "Live," and we live. Duty says "Die," and we must go. We may live or we

may die, but living or dying we are the Lord's. Meekness has but one will, and that is to do the will of the Father. It carries no sceptre. It strikes or forbears, speaks or is silent, in response to a divine impulse. Like St. Paul, it becomes all things to all men. Meekness leaves it to self-will and arrogance to dictate a rigid course. It holds it more comely to have respect unto others. It is wise enough to fit all occasions; is liquid, but penetrating.

We must not insist on method; method is mine, then yours, then everybody's, then nobody's. Look sharp to the spirit of the thing, and let every one express it in what way he will. Methods will be as different as faces, and no one has the right to match all eyes with his own, or to piece out other people's noses to make them look like his. Season all things with charity, if not because it is right, then because it is wise. Meekness after charity. Handsaws are useful articles, but make poor parlor ornaments; so personal notions and manners serve well in their places, but elsewhere are intrusions. We both love the Lord

Christ, you as a follower, I as an ambassador, both of us faulty, neither of us perfect, and who say which is greater in the kingdom of heaven? The prophet ceases to be a prophet when he becomes arrogant. Meekness never assumes. Of none else can it be said as it was said of Christ that he is meek and lowly in heart; for though he spake with authority, he said, "Not I, but the Father." Even with the "all power" that was given him, he hid behind his Father's will. There is no breadth, no leniency, no mercy, no meekness like his.

Meekness develops under discipline. Out of a chaos whose disorder is not known, come a host of advantages, made the servants of prosperity and success. Mind and heart must submit to training, but when God begins his work no one knows it. Heaven seldom betrays its own secrets. But in course of time the fact of power is revealed. Men have called the process "trial," "misfortune," and like misnomers of ignorance, little dreaming that the hand of the Almighty was upon them for good. You and I have suffered pain and disappoint-

ment without a syllable of explanation. But in these places we must give no ear to the tempter's whisper, "Curse God, and die." If we did but know what our Lord would do with us, we would say, "Bless God," and live. Whether we recognize it or not, it is God's process of creating within us the conditions of power, both with heaven and among men. So when we receive discipline to advantage, we have gone a long way, have learned a great deal, even though we do not realize it.

There is a nobility of character in meekness. The untutored will not recognize it until it is too late to do reverence, but the nobility is there, nevertheless. All grandeur, whether in nature, art or letters, is slow to impress itself. Most great things are disappointing, for the reason that the mind is not trained to take in anything but the exterior and commonplace. You see the mountain, view the plain, hear the orator, and it is different from what you expected. You thought you would be overwhelmed, transported outside yourself. But it was a disappointment, and you went away

chagrined, or trying perhaps to manufacture a little enthusiasm for appearance' sake. It was because you could see and hear only what you were accustomed to. What was new, what was great, was so far beyond that you looked, but did not see; listened, but did not hear. When shall we learn that appreciation is a process; that we must needs come again and again and again before we can realize worth and greatness.

But we are ever slow; slow to discern the merits of good and the evils of bad. The world has never yet been able to receive its great men as it should, because one age cannot draw out and appreciate qualities that coming generations shall look back upon with gratitude. It was impossible that Christ should live long. The blear-eyed looked, but could not see the majesty of his gentleness, the splendor of his meek and lowly life, until they had put him out of the way, and then it began to be known who he was. If he had come, like Mohammed, with trumpet and sword, appealing to what they were used to, he would have won them

all. But who cared for a calm philosopher, a preacher of forgiveness and forbearance, a speechless prisoner, a defenseless man, a Savior who could not save himself? A materialistic world, wrapped up in the charms of display, and size, and noise, pays little attention to demonstrations of spirit. If Christ should come again to-day, he would still be as far beyond us as he was beyond the people of Cæsar's time. His real power, clothed in matchless gentleness and leniency, would have no charm or weight compared with the business activities of our age. His mildness would have to be viewed on many sides, pondered, tried, before posterity would rise up and call him blessed.

But veneration is the recompense the world makes for abuse. The good and great are first misunderstood, then martyred, then sainted. Many good works they have shown, and for want of appreciation, forsooth they are stoned! O foolish world, with the blood of a Lincoln, a Columbus, a Stephen, a Socrates, a Christ, on your hands, over which you may

weep, "Out, damned spot," to all eternity, when will you learn that the meek shall inherit the earth in spite of persecution? Their fortitude, their helpfulness, their endurance, will live when history shall have consigned their tormentors to ignominy and shame. The thoughts men get from God are immortal; their heritage shall never pass. And he has given for a surety of possession the radiant words of his ever-glorious Son, "Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth."

So it appears that a law is working toward the fulfillment of the promise, and this again is evidence of the truth that righteousness is best. To fulfill God's will and get the best are as one. It must have been some such thought as this that Browning had in mind when he wrote:

"It's better being good than bad;

It's safer being meek than fierce;

It's fitter being sane than mad.

My own hope is, a sun will pierce

The thickest cloud earth ever stretched;

That after Last returns the First,



Though a wide compass round be fetched;  
That what began best can't end worst,  
Nor what God blessed once prove accurst."

The time has not yet come, when, in the fullest sense, the meek inherit the earth, but everything points that way. Slowly, slowly the civilized, Christianized world is turning away from cruelty and blood, and a milder reign is being ushered in as gently as the quality it represents. When that day comes might will no longer make right. There will be no longer the aristocracy of blood, or the aristocracy of wealth, but what has been called an aristocracy of intellect and heart. It will be a reign of culture, when trained minds and disciplined thought will hold the balance of power. Difficulties will then no longer be settled with the bayonet, but by just arbitration. It will be useless to appeal to passion, for a higher court of appeal will settle all things, in that happy day when the meek shall inherit the earth.

And every indication points toward just that state of affairs. That is the meaning of the



desire for pure laws and just courts; it is the meaning of religious parliaments, and the tightened hold politeness and courteous manners are taking on all classes.

These are indications of a moral and spiritual change. The "crescent promise" of the ascendancy of a new dynasty upon earth is rising. It will be an age of largeness and simplicity; harshness forgotten; childlikeness in the lead; all things in harmony; angels singing of good will to men; heaven honored; a new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness, illumined by a roseate morn, in whose lap are the pearls of peace.



THE FOURTH BEATITUDE.



## HUNGERING AND THIRSTING.

Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled.—Matt. v. 6.

“ Jesus, Thou joy of loving hearts,  
Thou fount of life, Thou light of men,  
From the best bliss that earth imparts,  
We turn unfilled to Thee again.”

Our attention is called to a familiar and common experience. The days of Noah are not the only ones that have been filled with eating and drinking; and eating and drinking always imply hunger and thirst. There is no other craving like this; as a bodily state it stands alone; there can be no mistaking it.

Therefore when Jesus would impress a great truth he clothed it in this clear, striking figure. No doubt he was grieved with the prevalence of self-satisfaction and self-confidence of the times. While men were in the extremity of woe and iniquity, they failed to comprehend

their situation, did not know their straits, did not see that they were lost. Few appreciated the fact of righteousness, and fewer still were concerned about having it and being it. The desire of the Jews for a higher life was like that of a large part of the un-Christian element of to-day—they will be good if it is no trouble. There was no intense longing, no yearning after truth and righteousness, no willingness to sacrifice for it.

For why should one seek when he is satisfied? Why be better when he is good enough? Jesus knew men would make little effort while there was little to impel them, for a sense of need is the first indication of a hopeful spiritual condition. One will never ask the way home who does not know he is lost. He who is content with the knowledge of the earth will not lift his thoughts to the stars. If we are perfectly satisfied with the dandelion and the clover-blossom, we will not inquire for the rose or the chrysanthemum. Satisfaction is stagnation. We must need before we seek supply. For this reason the man with the

muck rake never lifts his eyes. All he wants is on the ground. And so Jesus would commend a deep sense of need unsatisfied, a craving for spiritual sustenance that was like hunger and thirst for food and drink. Blessed, said he, are those who thus feel.

Men's wants are their friends. Their word is, "Silver and gold have I none, but such as I have give I thee," and they lead the way to good. When want knows itself as want, it is on the way to sufficiency. "That he is empty of good," one writes, "need discourage no one; for what is emptiness but room to be filled?"

All improvement is in this line. What we have we think less of than what we have not; as a well-fed man thinks less of the dinner past, than the hungry man of the dinner that is to come. We are debtors to need; not to lack, but to felt lack, felt to the extent of necessity. Then it becomes a demand of nature, and will not rest until it is satisfied. Nothing can put it off. There is no cure for necessity but compliance. We make our friendships

thus. A sense of loneliness induces us to seek the company of others. Our own knowledge is not wide enough for the full play of thought. And besides, we need to be countenanced in our views, corrected in our errors. Who can do it? we ask, and the sensitive mental tentacles go all about seeking for something to lay hold on. James and William have been acquaintances, but they are transformed into friends when we feel they meet our needs. So when we come to feel that we need more than we have in ourselves, or can find in any other, we turn to Jesus our acquaintance, and make him Jesus our friend. That is just what being a Christian means—"making friends" with Jesus.

But this is only preliminary to a more prominent thought. What attracts the attention is the degree to which the desire for spiritual things must impress us before we can expect satisfaction. "Hunger and thirst" is a strong term and implies a good deal. And this phraseology is the exact expression of a conviction that has been growing in the mind of



the writer for some time, namely, that a vast deal depends on whether we long for good, or whether we would merely like to have it. There is as much difference between the two as there is between the feelings of a healthy man who has gone without his dinner and is actually hungry, and a man whose fancy is tickled by the sight of cakes and crullers in a baker's window.

It takes earnestness to bring about results. The blessing of God is only for those who have an intense desire for it. "Happy are they who hunger and thirst after righteousness."

But lest it may appear that this is a principle that belongs altogether to the religious sphere, let it be noticed that we may observe the counterpart of almost every religious precept in daily life; and that if we act unquestioningly there with what we call "nature," it is reasonable to transfer the same to religious truth and action. Therefore it remains to be said that, as a rule, we must be positive and intense before we can reasonably expect to win

anything. Carlyle remarks that we must not be passive buckets to be pumped into. We have to do our own pumping, or we are never filled. Each must have for himself a powerful energy within, or he will accomplish nothing. Environment is a tremendous power, and unless we can match it from within it will hurry us to ruin. Around us press ten thousand enemies, only waiting opportunity to enter and slay. All life is a battle between the within and the without, and when the within fails to defend itself it must capitulate. What makes great men, what makes good men, is only their greater force to repulse attacks. We must act. When this power fail us doom comes.

This is what constitutes the "go" in life and nature. We see it everywhere. When the steam gauge is low the engine runs slowly. When the river runs dry the mill grinds no corn. Rob Napoleon of his intensity, and he will never enter Moscow. Engines, or mills, or men, it is all the same thing. We all run by some motive power, and the more refined the power, the higher the pressure and the

harder we go. Luther was full of it, therefore he stood fearless in the Episcopal palace. So was Paul. With him it was not, "I delight to preach the gospel," but "Woe unto me if I preach not the gospel." Angelo's whole being was consumed with his art, so that when one asked him why he never married, he replied, "Painting is my wife and my works are my children." What wonder that his frescoes astonished the world! When Agassiz was offered large sums of money to enter the lecture field, he said he was so engaged in his pursuits that he had no time to make money.

It is tenseness that triumphs. The more rigid the bow-string, the swifter the arrow flies. The finer the stretch of the guitar string, the higher the tone it gives. From like treatment you may expect like results, from hemp, cat-gut or mind. We are all sluggish and will do little unless we are keyed up to it. No one knows what he can do until the emergency comes that hauls taut his slackened energies. The wise world has said that "necessity is the mother of invention," and the saying is an il-

lustration of the principle in hand. Anything that puts us under desperate circumstances stimulates to action. Most people work hardest under pressure.

Wishing never made a man a man. It never saved any one from drowning. "O, how I wish I could speak French," you sigh; and some toothless crone is heartless enough to remind you of the proverb, "If wishes were horses beggars might ride." Then when you put your teeth together and say, "I will learn French," she whispers respectfully in your ear another proverb, "Where there's a will, there's a way." All our wishing is just so. We must put an intensive to every desire, and say, "I want it—very much."

Now all we have to do is to carry this idea over into this particular part of the sermon on the mount. We shall find it is not enough to admire the teachings of Christ, or to wish ourselves better, or even to have a nominal desire for deeper spiritual life. Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness. If righteousness is of great value it is worth

longing for, and that precedes striving for. If I see one gazing with wistful eyes on God's good things I know it will not be long until he will begin to fill himself. We are hot in pursuit of gain and glory and all too slow in seeking good. Be positive; be intense; want good very much; think of it; dream of it; lave in it; hunger and thirst for it. Do not tell me you desire righteousness; that is not all—you must long for it. Do not say you dislike sin; that is insipid; you must hate it. God likes decided natures, and this beatitude is for them. There is no place in his regard for luke-warm Laodiceans.

We all differ from one another, but there is no reason why all should not rise; there is no reason why one should not be better to-morrow than to-day. If he has the divine enthusiasm within he will be. That is the absorptive power that extracts the nectars of life and sweetens our own natures.

The poet gazes about, "his eye in a fine frenzy rolling," and sees what only his poetic nature could. When we too have an eye for

holy things, we shall see what others cannot. When we are touched by divine incentive then we can magnetize the good and draw it to us.

Neither the good we get nor the evil we exorcise is by anything but the working of an imbued heart. Oft times men grow no better because their minds are too sordid to aspire. Their sins do not leave them because they will not push them out. Such need daily some voice to say to them, "This kind cometh not forth but by prayer and fasting." When St. Paul wanted to show that the supreme standard of resistance to evil had not yet been reached, he wrote to the Hebrews, "Ye have not yet resisted unto blood striving against sin." Our Saviour's words to his disciples were, "Strive to enter in." In all Scripture there is no encouragement to inactivity. Everything goes to show that man must love the Lord his God with all his heart, soul, strength and mind. He must be ravished with the beauty of spiritual blessings. Aye, as the hart panteth after the water brook, so must his soul pant for God. That was the Psalm-

ist's expression for hungering and thirsting after righteousness. David and Jesus speak in the same strain.

It is always pardonable to go into ecstasy over the matchless character and power of God. Not long ago the author took up Joseph Cook's lecture on "Communion with God as Personal," in which he quotes this Boston marching-song:

" Bounds of sungroups none can see;  
Worlds God droppeth on his knee;  
Galaxies that loftiest swarm,  
Float before a loftier Form.

" Mighty the speed of suns and worlds;  
Mightier Who these onward hurls;  
Pure the conscience fiery bath;  
Purer fire God's lightning hath.

" Brighter He, who maketh bright  
Jasper, beryl, chrysolite;  
Lucent more than they, whose hands  
Girded up Orien's bands.

" Sweet the spring, but sweeter still  
He who doth its censers fill;  
Good is love, but better who  
Giveth love its power to woo.



“ Lo, the Maker ! greater He,  
Better, than His works must be:  
Of the works the lowest stair  
Thought can scale, but fainteth there.

“ Thee with all our strength and heart,  
God, we love for what Thou art;  
Ravished we, obedient now,  
Only, only perfect Thou ! ”

The career of Cardinal Richelieu would make a volume of instruction on the power of intensity. He was ambitious of power and loved it “ as Michael Angelo loved art and Palestrina loved music,” Dr. Lord tells us. “ Power was his master passion, and consumed all other passions; and he resolved to gain it in any way he could—by flatteries, by duplicities, by sycophancies, by tricks, by lies, even by services.” He became all things to all men; he was learned, wise, devout, frivolous, and witty by turns. He had the adaptability of a Paul or a Chesterfield. But he used it all for a single end. In court and cabin he went about with an insatiable appetite, hungering



and thirsting after power, until he ruled king and people.

Here is but an example. What Richelieu attained in the kingdom of France under Louis XIII, any of us may attain in the kingdom of heaven. It is not a question of ability so much as of intensity. How much of God's good we get depends on how much we want of it. The wise Power above does not cram those who do not crave.

And the blessedness of it all is that "they shall be filled." That divine indwelling, that mind of Christ imparted to the extent of repleteness is happiness itself. And if it is happiness itself, and we begin to be filled here, we ought to begin to be happy here, ought to enjoy heaven in proportion as we have heaven imparted to us. Of course we cannot be completely happy until we are completely filled; as hungry men are only less hungry when they have eaten a little. And the beatitude is that they "shall be" filled, that is, in coming time, in God's good time. The bread and water of life will infuse new strength here and now, but

not until by and by shall we cry in satisfaction,  
Enough.

And the closing word is that it was God who woke to an intense desire, by sending righteousness in perfect pattern and in human form. It is incarnate in Jesus Christ. The character of that one cannot but engender a desire to be like it. Go look on the ideal majesty of that life, on its marvelous simplicity, its stern obedience, its tender sympathy, its spotless purity, its uncompromising attitude toward hypocrisy, its untold sacrifice, its moral victories, its final triumph. It is the divine righteousness as shown in Christ that awakens hungering after itself; and the great thing is that there is enough that all may be satisfied.

**THE FIFTH BEATITUDE.**



## THE MERCIFUL.

Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy.—Matt. v. 7.

Mercy has never had such a living exponent as Christ. That quality of heart that appeals to every condition of men and state of mind, and wins its way wherever it is known, was incarnated in the Man of Nazareth to an extent surpassing knowledge. Most fitting was it that he should pronounce the blessing upon those who so closely conform to his character that they have a right to the name of which he must remain forever the type.

Christ could not have been what he was and be otherwise than filled with mercy—mercy full. There was a marvelous equilibrium in his nature which sought to bring all things to a just balance. Mercy we are wont to think of as the contrary of justice, but after all, it is not so much unlike it. Mercy lends to an

equilization of rights and privileges that brings about a state of justice. There is a perfect balance in God's requirements. He will have all men on an equality, so far as privileges are concerned. He justifies no man in setting himself up at his neighbor's expense.

There is a law of fair play in this God's universe, that seeks to equalize things and put all men on the same footing. No one can do damage to his neighbor with impunity. The wrong done finds its way home. The one who works himself into favor or place by unfair means must wait his turn to be dealt with. The sabre of justice smites both ways, if it smites one way. The one who hinders is hindered himself; the helper is helped in the long run. At least if that is not always true there is a law working toward that end, and it becomes quite plain where pure religion has gained a foothold. Christ said, "Whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them." That means that every soul is to have a fair chance. It puts a stigma on the one who wants more than his share of

courtesies or dividends. When the golden rule becomes a golden habit, there will be fewer chasms between men; they will stand where God designed they should, more on a level and nearer together.

Mercy makes room for privilege. It opens the door to opportunity. It neither muzzles the ox nor hastens foreclosures. Heaven is its home, and where mercy is, the promise of the kingdom of heaven has been measurably fulfilled.

For some reason or other there appears to be too little reverence for certain well-defined spiritual laws, which hold good on the stock-exchange as well as in church. There seems to be a prejudice against anything that savors of religion, until it is found to be advantageous, and it is then adopted for policy's sake. Of course there is no merit in that, but the fact serves to show the wide reach of much of gospel truth. In this way people of the world will repudiate the spiritual law that the merciful obtain mercy, until they see it verified again and again in every-day life. Such verifications

do not form the widest scope of the application of the beatitude, nor the highest reference, but they may open the door to the highest. The highest reference is to God's mercy extended to man for man's mercy to man. Yet if God permeate all spiritual law, is it not all God's mercy still?

Briefly stated the law is this: What we are to others, others are to us. There is no stereotyped course of conduct with us, and people change their attitudes toward us when we change our attitudes toward them. If you deal honestly with men they will be more honest with you than otherwise they would be. A kindness extended is likely to be kindly received. There is a proverb which declares that "Respect commands respect," and it is only a fragment from the older proverb that mercy obtains mercy. The respect one bestows will be returned. A gentlemanly rebuke will elevate one, even in the estimation of a bully. We admire Christ because we think he has respect for us, and love him because he first loved us. That is, human nature re-



sponds to an attraction and returns smile for smile.

But it has its repellent power too, and represents unkindness and encroachment. It is no cheat to cheat a cheater, is one of the world's working maxims, and everybody is glad to see the biter bitten. If you turn the cold shoulder to others, you must expect to be frozen out in turn. The mercy one refuses will be refused; the consideration he does not pay, he must not expect to receive. Do not put your head under your wing and then wonder that the other birds of the forest do not sing from the boughs of your tree. He who would have friends must show himself friendly; sour face meets sour face in the mirror of human action. Your reflection moves backward or forward as you do. Opposition begets opposition. The noose tightens with a contrary pull.

It is human nature to give tit for tat. Eye for eye and tooth for tooth was the old law; mercy for mercy is just as old, and only another form of the same thing. When Christ bade men return good for evil, it was but a re-

adjustment, a changing of the channel. There was no new law created for the course of kindly action. Christ simply made use of the old law that like is met by like, whether it be good or whether it be evil. The newness of it and the gospel of it is simply this, that Christ would have us make the advances. Instead of every one getting evil for evil, he would have us break with the law for once, and return good for evil, only to experience its workings again in correspondence with our changed conduct. The old way took people down hill at a fatal rate. The gospel puts on the breaks, reverses the engine, and goes up again over the rails of the same law. Christ came not to destroy but to fulfill; he came to show the possibilities of human nature, and give a peep into the divine; came to declare the far-reaching truth that with what judgment men shall judge they shall be judged; and with what measure they meet it shall be measured to them again; came to declare that the voice of thunder or the voice of music, as it comes from God or man, is but the echo of the beat-

ing of the heart, but our own selves coming home.

If there were a greater appreciation of the quality of mercy it would create soul-thirst for more, for the mercy that man receives of man is insignificant in comparison with that he receives from God. And the contrast between men's merciless attitude toward one another, and God's merciful attitude toward them, is a still greater contrast.

In the parable of the unmerciful servant an almost preposterous supposition is made: that of a debtor being generously forgiven a debt of tens of millions of dollars, and immediately going out and siezing by the throat another who could not pay him a few paltry pennies, and casting him into prison. But the contrast is not over-drawn. Not yet have men begun to comprehend the meaning of mercy. They neither realize obligation for what has been received already, nor dream what is still in store. Yet in a general way we expect great things from heaven. Every boon the mind conceives it makes petition for, only to repine

against Providence if the request meets a negative reply.

What do we expect from heaven? Just what the unmerciful servant expected from his master in a superlative degree, and just what he would not extend to his own debtor—forgiveness. The inconsistency of conduct is that we ask a thousand times more of God than we are willing to do ourselves; that we cannot see that the forgiveness we hope for ought justly to be commensurate with the forgiveness we show. We are slow to see that if we expect God to blot out all our slights and sins toward him that he tells us are so enormous that we cannot comprehend them, we are very much remiss when we cherish grievances against our neighbors for sins only a fraction as great. Forgive as you would be forgiven, is our Lord's requirement. "For if ye forgive men their trespasses your heavenly Father will also forgive you; but if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses."

O, the fullness of divine pardon! How can

men expect God's smile, when they have no smile for their brothers? How can they ask him for salvation from sin, when they will show no quarter to paltry offenses? O my friends, the sweetness and majesty of a great life are in that act of forgiveness. There is nothing that is nearer the heart of creation than the power to remit just dealing with wrongs. "To err is human; to forgive divine." Impulse may pronounce judgment and penalty, but we may not take impulse for guide to the kingdom of heaven; we neither love nor respect it. It is only when our souls grow large with love and knowledge, that we can realize the starry heights to which that clemency of spirit belongs. When we become denizens of the haunts of magnanimous conduct, we shall press less rudely hearts that God yet lets beat, and the best thought of the wise world will rise up and call us blessed. When we can bless them that curse us, and pray for them that despitefully use us and persecute us, we become heirs of heaven's honors; we have promise of a place beside Jesus and Stephen.

Another expectation is that heaven will supply divine help. Yet why expect what we will not give? We help each other in a way, and yet it is to be feared we are only in the rudiments. Our charities are warped—our aids one-sided. Our help is chiefly along the line of cast, for unfortunate people of our own level. We help the poor with a pole. Contact is degrading and distance is at a premium. Each of us is ready to secure a back seat and let the proceeds go to the support of a nurse or minister. Few are strong enough to bear the rebuke, “He eateth with publicans and sinners.” Help with us often means much smoke and little fire; great noise and nothing done. What can you tell from the treasurer’s books of the good done? Charity begins at home, we are told, so we build and adorn to please our tastes, and religion becomes the servant of desire. When shall we come to a knowledge of the truth that the highest worship of God is not cathedral worship, but worship in office and home, in street and store and shop; worship that lends

the hand of help, not simply where it is wanted, but where it is needed. It is that that pleases God, and such incense shall ever rise. "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren ye have done it unto me."

It is the mercy we show that argues mercy for us. We all stop far short of what we might do, yet there is no limit to expectation from the Almighty. We must remember the established proportion, that as we forgive we are forgiven; as we show compassion and friendliness and help, we receive. We need to turn our prayers back on ourselves and ask how much of what we petition for ourselves we grant to others; for just that seems to be the basis of expenditure in the economy of the kingdom of heaven.

Still another expected favor is consideration. Some of us are forever excusing ourselves, on the ground that heaven knows and the Lord is kind. "Lord, remember my weakness and judge in mercy," is a petition, which, the higher it rises, the harder it falls on the head

of the suppliant, if he does not carry out his own policy in his dealings with men. There is room for a vast deal of criticism upon professing Christians, because of harsh judgments. That love that suffereth long and is kind, that rejoiceth not in evil, that beareth all things, that never faileth, has not yet ripened into perfection among the great body of believers.

The common lack of leniency is lamentable. "I would not do so, therefore he is wrong," is a superficial judgment that most people are guilty of passing. That compassion that filled the bursting heart of the Christ when he prayed, "for they know not what they do," is only in germ, alas ! in many hearts. We stand among the crowd of accusers that hound the poor woman taken in sin; but the Master of men can dismiss with a smile and the words, "Go and sin no more." The lesson is slowly learned, the lesson our Father would have us learn early and well, that kindness is noble, and that mercy is more becoming than judgment. The disposition to be considerate is as much of a virtue and far more Christly than



that which sees nothing but fault. The zealous without knowledge have always come with power and thunder. Not such have the spirit of Jesus. Mercy must meet mercy. The boon we long for from heaven, we must ourselves confer upon men. The patience, the forbearance, the consideration which God exercises toward men, and which makes us venerate and love him so, calls for a like disposition on our part. Such logic is apparent, for consistency defends itself.

So, then it is not the mercy we show, but the mercy that is shown us that is the great thing. Human mercy is admirable, but divine mercy is transcendent. God's is the antecedent of whatever we may do, and the reward after we are done. His mercy makes merciful, and when all is over crowns us with itself. It bounds all action. Therefore, not the merciful, but the mercy obtained is above all, for that mercy is God.

Happy the man who attains divine favor! God deals bountifully with him as he has dealt with others. As he has done it shall be done

to him. The compassion he has extended is a thousand times returned. "Come ye blessed of my Father," says the voice of One ever welcome to his own, "inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world." And the everlasting doors are opened; countless blessings break upon the head; the morning joy has come.

**THE SIXTH BEATITUDE.**



## HEART PURITY.

Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God.—Matt. v. 8.

It has been said that “no man hath seen God at any time.” And yet to see God has been the desire in all ages of those who in any way care for that which pertains to another world than this work-a-day one. But the desire has been too sensual, and the very nature of it makes it impossible. How can we see a pure spirit-God with eyes all polluted with sights and scenes unholy? It is to be left to other eyes than those with which we gaze sensuously to see God. For those who have heart-eyes, eyes of love, desire for goodness and truth, it is for such eyes of the soul that the vision of God is reserved. It is to them that the promise is made. We must never expect here or hereafter to see God as we see ordinary things in life. We shall see God as

we see truth, as we see holiness in the night time when the lids are closed, and darkness is all around. That is the way we shall get the vision if we ever prove ourselves worthy of the vision.

While Jesus talked with his disciples, one of them broke in with the exclamation: "Lord, show us the Father, and it sufficeth us." Ah, yes, that would suffice many a one who wishes to see, but cannot, and never will. But Jesus patiently told the waiting listeners that the vision depended not on the presentation but on the preparation. It was not a matter of the Father showing himself, but a question of their being able to see the Father when he was before them. He and his Father were one in all things—the same in spirit, will, love. The exterior was not Jesus. Jesus—the Jesus that he was above all appearance—was to be seen with an eye they had not yet learned to know of, the eye of the soul. If they were expecting to see a God with their senses, one to be discerned and enjoyed after the manner of the flesh, they must know that he was of

no such form and appearance, was not to be enjoyed in that way. He would have them know that he himself was more than they saw with the outward eye. That which could only be seen through contemplation, that was the real Jesus, and if they could not see that in him, how could they see it elsewhere? If they could not behold God the Father in the clearest manifestation ever made of him, how could they see him in that which was less clear?

And so our Saviour sought to show that we must look below surfaces. In the good and great there is a vast deal more than comes to the outside; that is only a covering, a vessel, a temple. Incarnation is but the garb of divine goodness. It was the great heart of Christ that lay beneath it all, and made all he did insignificant in comparison with what he was and could do, that gave the true idea of God. Whoever could lay aside the seen, and close his eyes to everything but that fact, had seen God. But that was so new to them that they must have questioned as did Nichodemus, "How can these things be?"

But they, as we, must learn that life is what we make it, and that the vision of God depends not on the "showing of the Father," but in the power of the heart to see. The Father had been before them all that time, and yet neither Philip nor the others knew him. And the Father comes to-day, again and again, and we know him not. It is not because he is not manifest, but because his manifestation is not known. It is the inner side of life that we must study, that which lies under the exterior of circumstance. When we do that we shall know God, even in this life.

Therefore if we do not see God it is because of heart impurity, stains on the being. We question why we do not see God. But if we had the mind of Christ we should know Christ. That is, if we were more of a piece with him and conformed more to his thought and heart, we should be better able to read the will of God, and to discern the mind of the spirit; for we are continually asking about the will of God, the beauty of God, the providence and government of God. And it all comes to us



—all this knowledge we seek of him—in proportion to our unsulliedness before him. After all, that is the greatest obstruction to vision. It does not depend so much on mental vigor and acuteness, as on a heart at one with God. Not so much on a near prospect as on a cloudless sky.

If one would really see God, if he has anything more than a mere curiosity to behold him, then he must be cleansed, purified. Shall the unclean gaze upon the Immaculate? Without holiness no man can see the Lord, afterward or now. Blessed are the heart-pure, the heart-cleansed. Here we are again at the heart, the citadel that Jesus came to this world to take. He did not ask for good conduct alone, for he knew that could be patched on anywhere. True, he desired righteousness, but he knew that righteousness that did not grow was a dead righteousness and could be put off as a garment. It was a living goodness that he wanted, goodness that got its power from connection with the heart, that partook of the whole nature, that was supplied

and kept alive by conviction, right motive, God's breath of inspiration. Therefore Jesus never prescribed rules, or forced conduct as we do. He would seem to teach that prescriptions are useless as far as right life is concerned. Why ask a man of no conviction on the subject to abstain from any given sin—the drinker from his cup, the gambler from his game, the lascivious from vice, the Sabbath breaker from his profanation? It is worthless, waste, an idle reformation, like tying twigs on the apple-tree. Or, as Jesus said in speaking with his disciples at another time, “No man putteth a piece of new cloth unto an old garment; for that which is put in to fill it up taketh from the garment, and the rent is made worse.” I could not ask a man not used to any form of reverence not to take the name of the Lord in vain. Why should he abstain for my request. I am not reforming him, or making him better. I have only put a new patch into an old garment; I have simply prescribed for him a temporary morality that is not his after all, but

my own. But that is too often our fault in dealing with wrong-doing—dictating a course of action that will wither and die as soon as we cease the exercise of personal influence. Jesus never undertook to reform so. He began at the center, and would have a man right from a motive, right because he is right all the way through. There will be no patchwork about it, nothing constrained or unreasonable. It will be natural; the good conduct will be part of the man himself, not a part of me or you.

If we could take a lesson in reform from the words of Jesus it would profit us all. For one thing we would learn that we must first inculcate a motive in man as a soil out of which action can grow. He must act on principle or else he is acting mechanically. Another thing is that we shall have more patience and charity for those who do not conform to our own standard of morality. We shall simply turn to our own selves and notice how we never do as urged is right, until we have succeeded in arousing a motive. Then we do it as a reason-

able service. It must not discourage or disappoint us that reforms in life are so slow. Remember we are too often working at the wrong end, and are trying to get people to do right before we have got them to think right. You cannot break a swearer of his profanity until you have touched the springs of action and he has learned reverence. When the good people used to say to the little boy of no Christian training whatever, when they discovered him on Sunday morning with his fishing pole in hand: "You must not fish on Sunday; don't you know it is wicked?" that was merely a waste of reproof so far as the boy was concerned. Why should he not fish? If he did not, it was simply that they made the request and he abstained because he was asked, not that he had any respect for the day. There was no piety in it for the boy, any more than there was any sin in it before he knew he ought not.

Now let the boy stand for the masses of greedy, selfish labor unions, and grasping, unjust monopolies and the whole principle on

which reform must proceed is before us. There is no virtue, so far as the people themselves are concerned, if they leave off this or that from any other motive than that of conviction of right, if they are pure on the outside only and are not pure in heart. And the spirit of the gospel is that we seek to turn the heart God-ward, and be not too impatient of righteousness without until there is righteousness within. That is what Jesus would have us know as the true way of life and thought. He cares a thousand times less for one good deed than for the good heart that was the mother of it. The pure mother will bring forth a whole brood of pure deeds.

But let us not use the word "pure" in too broad a sense. All sin is impurity, but there are some that are particularly so designated—sins of such a nature that it is considered a very delicate matter even to refer to them. Yet what indeed is so deadening to the sense of right and of truth as any form of indulgence in this kind of impurity. And the baneful influences of a life soiled in sin by any one

of the various forms of violation of the seventh commandment are not to be confined alone to any class, or age, or sex. A thousand times it has been verified that a first sense of fitness and right has been altogether forgotten, and a heartlessness and a dullness induced that are criminal. In words familiar because so true to life:

“ Vice is a monster of such hideous mien,  
That to be hated needs but to be seen.  
But once beheld, familiar with her face,  
We first endure, then pity, then embrace.”

Do not let me be understood as speaking of gross immorality but of refined sin, sin of thought, sin that lurks in the shadows, that breaks in unbidden without a knock at the door. That is heart sin, the beginning of all the others, and that is why it is so carefully to be guarded against. Jesus did not wait to reprove the already hardened; he said, “ He that looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery already with her in his heart.” That is, he sought to correct the thing in its

insipieney, while yet it was hidden and unknown, something that had not gone so far it could not be driven out. Remember it is the pure in heart, not the pure outwardly, of whom the Master says, They are blessed.

There must be no tampering with temptation, no dallying with the forbidden. The sin in the heart is no less a sin because it is in the heart. It is tangible before God, and will make itself tangible in life, if it is not held back. It is fatal sometimes to think. The serpent cannot be held in the hand without danger. "Can a man take fire in his bosom, and not be burned? Can one go upon hot coals, and his feet not be burned?" You cannot handle pitch and not be defiled. You cannot indulge in the lascivious look without a stain on the moral character. It weaves into the make-up; it poisons the thought habit; it defiles the man. Little by little it

"hardens all within,  
And petrifies the feeling."

Day-dreams indulged are dangerous, and



when they are admitted “farewell to all purity and peace. From the serpent’s egg shall break forth the cockatrice, and its end shall be a fiery flying serpent.”

Of each indulgence it may be asked, What profit? This is a sin whose returns are not lasting, which, no matter how long its promised good may be followed, only mocks and retires as the seeker of pleasure pursues. There is no phantom like that of lust in any form. There is no deception that so utterly disappoints in its every profession as does this. Instead of satisfaction, it creates desire; the pleasure was not this time—it will be in the next. Each indulgence in forbidden thought begets two others more gross than itself. Multiplicity creates habit; habit becomes nature. For the pleasure expected—remorse, ashes, shame.

For, be not deceived, you cannot keep it within your own bosom. Putridity of heart will poison the atmosphere of action. Good intentions languish and become sickly; dignity suffers; simplicity of conduct dies, or leads a



hypocritical existence. It is the inevitable penalty of transgression, the penalty paid in this life, the penalty which often is not recognized, and the criminal wonders about results, not thinking that these results are the results of other results. It is the penalty of languid will, indefinite action, remorse, failure. A great many praying people have need to pray often, "Cleanse thou me from secret faults."

We may be sure that as long as the heart is not pure there will be no vision of God. Those who are freest from all heart impurities will get the clearest vision of the Father and the Father's will. They will live the freest life, will have the clearest consciousness of right and of duty; they will be happiest. So that we may conclude it all by saying that purity, happiness and the sight of God are as one.



THE SEVENTH BEATITUDE.



## PEACE AND ITS BLESSINGS.

Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God.—Matt. v. 9.

If Christ had not placed a high estimate on peace, he would not have offered so high a reward to the promoters of it; for what honor is greater than the distinction of sons of God?

We cannot find grounds for the belief that the things of God are working at variance with one another, and that discord is the law of the universe. It seems more consistent to hold that God is a God of peace, dwelling in things and men richly, notwithstanding a seeming antagonism. Peace is harmony, oneness, and we cannot think that in the one God, in the Prince of Peace, divergence dwells, or variation or opposition.

But when we hear the same Christ who said, "Peace I leave with you," saying, "I came not to send peace, but a sword," we are

strangely at a loss how to reconcile it all. Now, we must know that God is of such nature that he cannot be at peace with evil. The carnal mind is enmity against God. Reconciliation will never come about between good and evil. Light and darkness, Christ and Belial, are by nature at perpetual war. Jesus came not to bring peace between the powers of righteousness and unrighteousness, or to propose compromise. It must be a warfare, entering even into the household, and separating the nearest relatives, bringing commotion into the home and state. But all good is in harmony with itself. There are no jar-rings in the kingdom of heaven. Its law is the law of peace, and he who is at one with the kingdom will be at one with himself, even though he be in the midst of distractions.

That is to say, Jesus came to separate good and evil in purpose and life, and there can be no separation without friction and enmity. That was the sword. But the estate into which the separated are called is one of absolute harmony. That was the peace. Christ

came not to bring peace between man and man as these were the representatives of the powers of evil and of good, but to bring peace between man and God, afterward peace with all that is at peace with God. Peace was to be within the heart of the righteous, but a sword in his hand against evil. Both are from God, and both came of the very nature of righteousness. It could not be otherwise.

Unless it comes to us, so the beatitude plays false to all spiritual conditions; is out of joint with the body of truth as Christ spoke it and as his disciples illustrated it. Wrong is not to be winked at; truth must not be trampled. Yet for all that, certain considerations enter in to determine the burden of claim to be on the side of peace. And how? If right must be arrayed against wrong, then it ought to be nothing but right against nothing but wrong; and how often can it be said, "All good is on this side, all evil on that"? Generally there is both good and bad on both sides, but if each strives with the other, then good and evil are not only at war with each other, but with them-

selves as well, which is triumph for Satan, but detriment to the kingdom of God. These things ought not so to be. Let unrighteousness war with itself if it will, but in God's kingdom righteousness and peace will kiss each other.

What, then, shall we say? Shall wrong pass unhindered? Let us make an appeal to our Lord, and who ever made so peaceful a crusade, led so noiseless a movement, accomplished so effectual a revolution as he? When he saw the hypocrisy of the times, the slavishness to form, the oppression and moral rot, instead of calling down twelve legions of angels to instigate a reform and put walls about wickedness, he used the other method, so much wiser that men are only beginning even now to put it into general use, that of putting the burden on men's consciences and showing them to themselves in their own true light. And he did it so boldly, so truly that he died for it. If he had led an insurrection, great multitudes would have flocked to his standard; for men will sacrifice to fight.



And so it has ever been; is now. Our noisy reforms insist on obedience or punishment. It is the old cry, "Koran or the sword." They are intended for good, but the support is from that element in human nature that delights in strife, and the excitement of the fray is more pleasing than the moral victory proposed. And if the victory comes what is it? Material conquest; temporary gain. It shows the triumph of power, not the triumph of virtue. There can be no real moral victory unless it be the victory over affection or will; that is, over heart or mind. Nothing else lasts. People send out missionaries on all kinds of good errands, then grow livid because vice is not suppressed in a twelve-month. Then follow police raids, and imprisonments, and hatred, the result of it all being to make the transgressor more determined than ever to succeed in his transgression.

It is thus our impatience seeks to force things, and we flatter ourselves we have accomplished something when we have ostracized some form of wickedness. Not so. We cannot kill out

the weeds of the garden by cutting off their tops, nor abolish slavery by war, nor prohibit intemperance by crusades, nor enforce Sabbath observance by law, nor destroy heresy by act of the church. What we have done is to put off the workings of wickedness or error for a time. But the day-long advantage comes to an end, and matters are worse than before. What was banished comes back to the garnished house with seven other devils, and the last end is worse than the first.

My friends, we shall always make limping progress as long as we fight evil with weapons carnal instead of mighty. If we were but half as ready to bring about and keep the condition of peace our Lord commends, as we are to take part in exciting strife, there is reason and promise to believe that long-time good would come. When you and I make many and personal visits to wrong-doers, pleading, reproaching in the spirit of courtesy and love, it will do more to bring men to righteousness than the fines and jails we insist on. But it is easier and more exciting to fight. It takes less bravery

to cast a ballot or instruct an officer than to talk in person with the transgressor in kindness. We need more of the heroism of peace. Its victories may be slower, but they will be abiding, for they are wars on Christ's plan, according to the laws of God. But while men are busy with material successes, and women long for places in Luxury's lap, God's kingdom cannot come; vice will know its opportunity and thrive, against whose inroads the only makeshift is to fight or die. How long, O Lord, how long shall thy people continue to put themselves under conditions whose recompense is woe!

How long has the church quarreled over creed? In less than three centuries after the death of the Prince of Peace his followers were killing one another because they could not believe alike. And the last half decade has revealed evidences of even greater wrong, considering present advantages. And, granting the formula made or defended to be absolutely true, what has been gained withal? Dogma at expense of peace—salvation made plain by

the placing of stumbling blocks—the affirmation of truth by denial of its power! Is it not the world's maxim, "Let us do evil that good may come"? Is it not Christ's way to reprove in love? "Let wheat and tares grow together," he said, "for if you root up the one you destroy the other." What wonder the kingdom does not come at the noise of clash and babble!

The Father loves peace, and wants his children to have it. Jesus would encourage his brethren to help one another into a state that is so evidently a blessing in itself. "For this," said he, "you shall be called the children of God."

For what does strife-making do but divide interests and alienate hearts from what ought to be objects of their affection. How can there be the spirit of union which Christ enjoined, when bickerings and strifes keep the caldron of bitterness boiling? It makes no difference whether the war be one of word or sword—the result is the same. Whatever else we may do we must know that by the strife

we cause or allow we have unsettled more of good than by other means we have established. Jesus asked nothing arbitrary when he prayed that his disciples might be one. He only asked that a condition might be maintained that would permit the simplest form of spiritual life and activity. The prayer shows the estimate he put on concord, and endorses the beatitude.

The basis of peace-making and peace-keeping is charity. How can one injure the brother whom he loves and whom he commends to his heavenly Father? But have not the children been exhorted in no uncertain terms to love one another? This mark of discipleship is the precursor of fruit-bearing unanimity and so of heirship from the Almighty. But as one suggests, "The main practical difficulty with some at least of the peacemakers, is, how to carry themselves toward the undoers of peace, the disunifiers of souls." And this after all is about the only difficulty, except with those who show themselves devil-born, in that they care less for peace than for feuds, out of which they extract such pleasures as only

demons delight in. That upon which the beatitude was pronounced was the calming of dissenting spirits, and such can come only through the fullest exercise of love. But "if ye love them which love you, what reward have ye? do not even the publicans the same?" What matter of congratulation is it that one is charitable toward those who are charitably inclined, that he has patience with those who have lenient views, that he is tolerant of tolerance, that he bows to those who have a bow for him? In other words, what particular credit is it that one does not quarrel with those who do not quarrel with him?

"Be ye therefore perfect," said Christ, "even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect." It is not enough to be as the world. The Father is to be the example to his children, the Father who maketh his sun to rise on the evil as well as on the good, on those who blaspheme him as well as on those who love him. It is not easy to be kindly disposed toward those who have no kindness in their dispositions, not easy except to those who

have something of the all-mastering grace of love, and therein is both the virtue and the reward. Our merit is that our large love covers not only the good, but the bad; discrepancy as well as sufficiency. It is not enough to have charity for the charitable; love for the loveless and unloving is the truthful test. By this we prove ourselves children of the Father; we belong to the family of God.

“ My God ! with what surpassing love

Thou lovest all our earth !

How good the least good is to thee !

How much each soul is worth !

“ How thou canst think so well of us,

Yet be the God thou art,

Is darkness to my intellect,

But sunshine to my heart ! ”

From the consideration thus far given it is evident that the keeping of the peace in church and world is not only a duty enjoined, but that the doing of the duty brings its own blessedness. The moment one but fills his part he finds God's ever ready law of reward fulfilling

the rest. It is matter of rejoicing that one is a child of God. For that means he has entered into new relationships that have new outcomes. Among other things this relationship means getting at one not only with God's self, but with the visible and invisible expressions of his self—physical, moral, spiritual. We have seen already how the keeping of these laws coincides with happiness, how unhappiness corresponds with discord in music. Peace is not only the condition but the cause of happiness. Strife consumes energy. There is no greater waster of forces than anger, hatred, jealousy, revenge, which both dissipate the attention and waste the time, and also tear down the physical tissue. Thus God has established the laws of reward and punishment which prescribe that the wrong doer shall suffer for his sins, while the righteous at once receives a reward. So clearly is the duty of peace-making written in blood, and registered in the nerves.

“Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in thy sight.”



When we get at the heart of it all we find God the good. If we believe that all things work together for good—that is for God—then we believe there is no real evil for those who love the good God. And “the unity of his being receives and steadies our changeful lives, and we know with him the

‘ Central peace subsisting in the heart  
Of endless agitation. ’ ”

Then we need to foster the spirit of harmony, because it not only brings happiness but promotes progress. Neither in store nor study, in thought nor action, prayer nor painting, can men improve on the past, on themselves, while each is anxious to tear away the pedestal on which another stands. They who run for the laurel wreath must not stop to wrestle; as they who run for the crown of better things cannot afford to waste time in contention. Science and inventions flourish “when the war drum throbs no longer,” as do truth and charity when sect is not uppermost. Let socialism take notes. The world grows wiser and bet-

ter as it fulfills Christ's requirement of peace, and the very wisdom and goodness is a part of the heritage of the children of God.

But this is one of the things "eye hath not seen." For one of the subtlest qualities of evil is its power to absorb the good. It is not enough to say, "I have done wrong." One must add, "And that has kept me from the right." Every sin is not only the presence of wrong done, but the absence of good that might have been done. When you admit strife you remit prosperity. In repressing another one suppresses himself. And this again is God's law, sin requiting itself.

O, we learn so slowly that peace is good and the peace-maker blessed.

**THE EIGHTH BEATITUDE.**



## PERSECUTION.

Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake. Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you.—Matt. v. 10-12.

This is the longest of all the beatitudes, and is the only one that is repeated. Thus early in his ministry Christ wishes to instill in his followers that bravery that he knew would afterward be essential. Christians in those days as well as in these suffered from weak backs, and the Great Physician was doctoring to strengthen the spine. Just as a little later on he gave them the tonic of encouragement, saying, "Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom," so now he was giving what was calculated to build up a strong and noble following.

Present-day persecutions differ widely from

those in the time of Christ and the dark ages. As civilization advances everything moves forward, vices as well as virtues, and why should not persecutions keep their place in the rank and file of things that are? Of course we would not expect them to be dressed in the same garb that history paints for them, for that was very unbecoming, and persecution like everything else, has an eye to appearances. And besides the improved habiliment, there is an air of culture and refinement in this excrescence of human conduct that only the nineteenth century could impart. But there is not so much difference as there might be between then and now, and the Saviour's words, "They will also persecute you," are not lacking of fulfillment even to-day.

And we can scarcely wonder. Worldliness cannot bear the presence of good, much less its rebuke. The light of consistent Christianity, brought into the haunts of vice, produces much the same effect as when the doors of a dark, damp place are opened, and the fresh air and sunshine set the bugs and beetles go-

ing. We know the result when one stirs up a hornet's nest, and unrighteous men, who have more stings than wings, proceed to use what they have. Christ said he came to bring peace, and he did—peace between man and God. But, as we have seen, he did not come to bring peace between righteousness and unrighteousness. Between them there is a great gulf fixed. Isaiah got himself into trouble by rebuking sin. So did Jeremiah and Micah. So did John the Baptist, and Peter, and Huss, and Luther. So did Potamiæna, and Marcella, and Perpetua, and Joan of Arc, and Anne Askew. So did Christ. It is almost impossible to live a strong life for good and God, without bringing down upon one's self the whole pack of the devil's wolves that are at that particular time harbored in the vicinity. If a man is at all like Christ he will continually run counter to evil, and when that evil is incarnate then beware. According to the Bible popularity is no compliment. "Woe unto you when all men speak well of you." One fault with the church and clergy of to-day is

that there is too little boldness. We pay more attention to ease and grace than to strength and power. One might easily understand the spirit of an old pastor who once said that he thought he could preach better if he had to go to jail for his principles about once a year.

Good, unadulterated, cannot remain unmolested by evil. Between them there is no union. Offenses must come; differences must arise; strife will ensue. Then come persecutions, and righteousness suffers at the hand of unrighteousness. Cain lives forever, and Abel dies at his hand again and again.

It has been stated that present-day persecutions are not like those of history, and they are not. The state has handed their management over to society in general, where they have been so remodeled as that they are more acute now, and less unwieldy than in days gone by. Instead of mutilating the body, the much finer art of torturing the mind is resorted to. Racks and thumbscrews have given place to deadly books and the poison of polite conversation,



the most refined instruments of persecution. There is no set place of inquisition now, for the man who works with you in the shop, or is associated with you on the board of trade, may suddenly turn on you with a sharp criticism, or fling some pointed bit of humor at you that will hurt for two or three days and perhaps rankle for as many months. And the more sincere you are in your efforts at right, the more likely you will be to feel it. It is not an uncommon thing now-a-days for a man's business to be ruined by the stand he takes on certain moral questions, and more than one man has been ostracized because he insisted on observing the Sabbath. The writer knows a gentleman who is continually tormented with drastic remarks about Christians and the Church; every one of which burns like lime cast into a fresh wound. And he knows another who is persecuted with low remarks and cutting flings whenever he passes a certain part of the city, and he would sooner walk up to the mouth of the lion's den than go there.

That is the form that persecution takes on

in these times. It is only an old foe with a new face. I would just as soon be responsible for using the flesh hooks on a human being, as for tearing his peace into shreds with criticisms or slanders. We must admit that much that is said is true; that in individuals and in the Church are errors that merit rebuke even from Satan himself. But the most that is said is not true, and the persecuted are they against whom all manner of evil is spoken falsely for Christ's sake.

It is upon these that Christ pronounces the blessing. He says the reward is so great that it warrants one in "rejoicing," and being "exceeding glad," even under the distress. And that is just like Jesus. He is always trying to show that things are not to be valued with the currency of the hour, nor measured with the yard-stick of this life. He would like to show us that God's discipline is a good deal like the discomfort one undergoes on the surgeon's table. He wants us to remember that while much pain is penalty, much also is corrective and preparatory. Whom he loveth he chasten-

eth. He wants us to remember what we are being prepared for. We are apt to think only of the pain of the knife, but Jesus would have us forget the pain in what is to follow. So he says to all who suffer for his sake, "Yours is the kingdom of heaven." It is his law of compensation, which he would placard everywhere, and have us know well and remember thoroughly—"Great is your reward in heaven."

We do well when we remember what a master worker God is, and how he finishes everything to a nicety; how he makes all things work together for good; how his wise and loving purposes send their long filaments into seeming evils, and twine all about them, and fulfill themselves from them. It is a sublime trust Tennyson sings in these lines, saying,

"That nothing walks with aimless feet;  
That not one life shall be destroyed,  
Or cast as rubbish to the void,  
When God hath made the pile complete.

"That not a worm is cloven in vain;  
That not a moth with vain desire  
Is shrivelled in a fruitless fire."

The song comes from the Bible. For some reason or other there seems to be a postponement of the enjoyment of good, as if perfect good were too much honor for this world. The place for true happiness is in the next world, and they who would try to change God's plan and find enjoyment now, simply change it, and suffer later on; they make no gain. Therefore Christ says: "Blessed are ye when men shall hate you, and when they shall separate you from their company, and shall reproach you, and cast out your name as evil, for the Son of man's sake. Rejoice ye in that day and leap for joy; for behold your reward is great in heaven: for in the like manner did their fathers unto the prophets. But woe unto you that are rich! for ye have received your consolation. Woe unto you that are full! for ye shall hunger. Woe unto you that laugh now! for ye shall mourn and weep. Woe unto you when all men shall speak well of you! for so did their fathers to the false prophets."

And it is not simply in the case of those who suffer for the Son of man's sake, that attention

is called to the fact that something better awaits them. The world's enmity and scorn reveals the wide difference between the Christian and itself, which is always a compliment to the Christian. And besides that, it is rated as a special honor to be counted worthy to endure hardship for Christ's sake. So that when next you give the gospel invitation to the hardened, and are greeted with the loud laugh or petty sneer, count it all joy. Be exceeding glad. Great is your reward. You are compared with the prophets. You enter into fellowship with Isaiah and Paul. The kingdom of heaven is yours.

But the question arises, What is the virtue in doing well for reward? People tell us if we seek return for our good, it is merely a bartering of commodities in a spiritual way. If we are offered for our course of trouble a compensation more than complete, and deliberately choose the one that we may gain the other, then we are on a par with the beggar who puts on rags and disfigures his face that he may win sympathy and alms; or with the

clown who simply makes a fool of himself for a liberal salary. At least that is the way it is put, and the way some are likely to act, if they are not thoughtful and wise.

We must learn to distinguish between a reward that adds to moral worth, and one that simply adds to personal gratification. The one adds to capacity, while the other tends to exhaust it. Personal gratification smacks of the purely selfish. But whatever adds to moral worth goes to make up a complete spiritual being, a blessing in itself. Whether or not it is right to have regard to reward depends on the nature of the reward. Now, the substance of reward, as the New Testament shows it, is the gaining of that personal righteousness, that to the seeker after righteousness is a reward in itself. Who does not care for righteousness will not care for its reward, for its reward is itself. It calls men to it, and confers itself as the greatest blessing it could bestow. At least we may so understand Paul, who says that he "presses toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in

Christ Jesus." That was a calling into perfect being, not simply into enjoyment of what pleases. He would be satisfied and perfectly happy when he had arrived at that high calling, at the simple being of what God would have him be. And that was the end toward which this ideal Christian and inspired writer worked. Later on he tells us that this same Jesus "endured the cross, despising the shame," and all "for the joy that was set before him." But can we think of Christ as entering into a joy of personal gratification? Can we attribute to him a sense of pleasure in a mere receptive enjoyment? What the disciple meant is seen in the words of the Master, "My meat is to do the will of him that sent me." To fulfill all righteousness, to be about the Father's business and accomplish his will, that was the one joy of the whole earthly career of our Lord. This was the reward that was set before him, for which he lived, and endured, and died. What higher spirit of righteousness can we conceive?

Too often people mistake the joy of heaven

to be the gratification of desire, either of lower or higher degree; but we are warranted in believing it to be in an enlarged spiritual nature. When we understand that, then we understand the meaning of the words, "The kingdom of heaven is within." The reward of righteousness is thus found to be righteousness itself, of which no man can say, "We have not the right of respect to its recompense." A heaven of mere delight would be near relative to the Mohammedan's sensual paradise. But a heaven whose fruition grows out of a nature that is itself what it seeks to enjoy, remains forever the admiration of the keenest intellect and the devoutest soul. There can be no question in seeking such reward.



# LAWS OF SOUL GROWTH

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## THREE SERMONS

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SHOWING THE COMMON RECOGNITION OF  
CERTAIN LAWS, AND POINTING OUT  
THE ADVANTAGES OF A MORE  
EXTENDED AND INTELLIGENT  
APPLICATION OF THEM.



**THE LAW OF ACCUMULATION.**



## THE LAW OF ACCUMULATION.

Unto every one which hath shall be given.—Luke xix. 26.

In one form or another I have long considered this subject, which to me has been fruitful of much thought. It has occurred to me that all gain comes by process of law, generally speaking; and that the law of increase is what in the physical sciences we call momentum. There is not only solar and terrestrial gravitation but there is a personal and divine gravitation as well. The earth has a power by which it attracts; but so have I. Everything I get, increases my power to get more. Everything I lose, increases the probability that I will lose more. My neighbor has the same quality. He has acquired more than I, therefore he gets more. He has more force with which to draw it. The law which governs his acquisitions will not be unlike that

which determines the distance covered by falling bodies—the square of the seconds multiplied by 16.1. Get one thing, and you get what goes with it. “Unto him that hath shall be given.”

This is the law which governs influence. It depends on friendship in the large sense of the word. The larger the following, the greater the sphere. Every one brings one. With every man for friend, all power is yours. Whoever capitulates in life's friendly wars, becomes an instrument of advantage; but he comes not alone. Burgoyne's surrender meant the surrender of six thousand. Their power became Washington's. We win men together with the retinue that follows. Give us Jupiter, and we have his satellites. When you have persuaded your neighbor to your belief, it naturally follows that he exercises an influence (not necessarily conscious) upon those who would be influenced by him in some other view.

That is, to him that hath influence, the very nature of things will bring him more. Reputation depends on it. Speak a good word for

thy fellow, and some other, who is anxious to carry news, and too lazy to challenge the hearing, will repeat it twice. Those who hear it will receive the next good report the easier. Because he has their good will, how much easier to make an impression of good! Say what you will, we are ready to receive good news of a good man. We have expected it. Everything is in his favor. "Just like him," we exclaim. A bad report shocks, and though we may repeat it, we refuse to believe it. The reason is, he has our confidence, and we extend it to him further. But once let it be ascertained that the evil is true, and we are willing to believe anything. It is because he has no standing with us, and even the credit of the good he may have done is taken from him. So true it is that "unto every one which hath shall be given; and from him that hath not even that he hath shall be taken away from him."

This is one great secret of riches. Get your start, and away you go. All kinds of credits are at the disposal of the wealthy. The more

your wealth the greater your opportunities. "No great returns without great investments," is an understood principle with board of trade and standard oil commissioners. We talk of the fabulous wealth of the few. But it comes by law, even if it is not by moral law. The poor man gets nothing because he has nothing to get with. Many a man might row out into the current if some one would push him from the shore. But "from him that hath not shall be taken even that which he hath," and the rich man appropriates the oars. The poor man is poor man still.

So it is in gaining knowledge. The most obscure bit of information that ever thrust itself upon the mind will call in a companion piece at some time. Science is only the best way of getting at things. Every fact ascertained with its cause opens the way for a score. One phenomenon accounted for reveals the law that leads to the discovery of all co-ordinate phenomena. All the universe is a system, and knowledge comes by mastering the major parts. What is not known comes



when the known is applied. Facts grow on long stems, and are best gathered as the flowers of the arbutus—first get the trail, which is the general cause, and you master all results.

But what I am trying to say is seen no clearer anywhere than in the course of success. However we may account for the process by which we are led to give credit to others, we cannot mistake the fact that reputation has a great deal to do with criticism. Establish yourself in the minds of the people and all is yours. Few dare contradict the great. To speak against the public mind is deemed presumption. Look at a celebrated painting, and the mere fact that it has been long and well received bespeaks favor for it. When some celebrated prima donna makes a tour every city vies with the last in praising her, and every plaudit is a new power guaranteeing more. Some inglorious, unknown songster writes on Spring and is laughed at. Tennyson writes twenty lines on the same subject, and receives five thousand dollars for his work. It is

because he hath that more is given him. You have wondered why people laugh at the funny man, even when he does nothing that is comical. It is tribute paid his reputation. A celebrated orator is to speak at the auditorium, and his name assures a marked attention. The very presence of the vast company, and the inspiration of their wrapt silence, lifts him into power he could not feel but for that. Yet he owes the night's success to occasions of the past, and it, in turn, contributes to the future. This is the great law of accumulation, and reads, The more you have, the more you get. Gain always increases power. Make sure start, and away you go. Who has most, gets most. Accumulation is its own argument. All things gravitate to the great. Both good and bad gather as they go. "Unto him that hath shall be given," and all men's Master hath spoken a law of the universe.

As we look away from the thousand verifications of the principle described, these observations advantage us in the law when spiritually applied, for it was spoken of spiritual

things. It means here exactly what it means in every-day life, where we feel it with such force. Every new power of spirit begets another. The one who has ten talents, not only gets five more, as his fellow, but ten; and not only that but the eleventh. There is no greater stimulus to moral and Christian effort than the recognition of his law of accumulation. One victory does not mean one, but two. One step upward does not take you so far, and leave you there, but is an impetus to a second. If it were not for this it would be well-nigh impossible to make progress. Right would be only a treadmill, we going step by step, but never moving. The old hymn we used to sing so much, "Yield not to temptation," had a subtle line in it: "Each victory will help you some other to win." Suppose it did not: who would be better in a hundred years? Progress would be impossible. Every day would be like yesterday, and next year find us no further than to-day. It is because it is true that to him who attains some power in spiritual things, more power shall be given,

that we may manage to get along.

The growth in grace we talk of is based on this. All the goodness we attain to is like a step we put under our feet to lift us to more. Take this away, and you and I must sit down to a life without even a hope of progress. Moralists and Christians have every reason to thank God for the fact that "to him that hath shall be given."

Would you be right? Then put yourself in the way of right. It is the principle of the toboggan slide—physical, moral or spiritual—and is tersely put, the farther the faster. Take the initiative in good, and believe in its power.

That is the first step in habit. Get your neighbor who hasn't been in church in ten years, to come once, and his mind naturally turns that way next week. What we do once, all things favorable, we are likely to do again. The mind runs in grooves, and thoughts and impressions repeat themselves again and again. We associate ideas, and consequently something is always suggesting something else. When the Esquimaux travels from the inland

to the sea, it reminds him of the home of the whale, and that of his own northern home, filled with the odor of blubber. So everywhere. Every one has a controlling thought. With the Esquimau away from home, it is the delights of snow and ice; with one it is love of the beautiful; with another, power; with another, social pleasure; with another, lust; with another, gain, or self-esteem, or sacrifice, or heaven, or travel, or language, or art, or science, or news-bearing, or what not. Everything we see is referred to the controlling life-thought. Good and bad are assimilated. Every one is a Midas, having the power of changing everything he touches to the ruling passion. Therefore, he who once does, has taken an initiative step, which by repetition becomes habit, and habit a controlling power. Change of taste comes slowly, but once change it, and you may feed it from a thousand sources. Then many a good that others seek in vain, will give itself to you. It is because you have, that to you is given. From your neighbor who has not, even the slight inclina-

tion he has is taken away. There is nothing to keep it alive; it dies.

We all need the enthusiasm of encouragement. Give us to see we have done something, and we can do more. Let me know I have made some achievement in Christian life, and I will center thought and effort for another, and will probably win. Let me feel that I have made one failure, and the cold chills come over me and freeze another effort. One evil overcome brings the tingle of satisfaction and victory, which flushes with the hope of a further triumph. One difficulty in Christian life surmounted makes me think—I can overcome another. There is nothing which lends to success like enthusiasm, and enthusiasm must have something to start from. Therefore, it is every one's duty to encourage every one else. Has your friend done something? It is not necessary to flatter, but let him know that you know it, and put it under his feet to step to something else on. Here is the great difference between adulation and commendation; one holds your good deeds up before your

eyes, the other lays them under your feet to climb on. Tell me I have done so and so very cleverly, and the action is fulsome. Tell me there is something to be done, and that I can do it because I have done the other, and you serve the cause and myself. Many a man fails because he knows not what he has. Let him know that he hath, and "unto every one which hath shall be given."

When one comes to me with the complaint that he gets little good from this, that or the other good thing—good books, sermons, revivals, or what not—I say to myself, It is because he hath not. Unto him who hath by effort found the fortune that lies wrapped in culture, there shall be given the power to grasp, and do, and delight in a hundred things that offer themselves to none else. We need to know the necessity of preliminaries, and preparations and introductions; to know that there must be a before to precede an after, and that what we are, contributes to what we would be. God's help is not always by inspiration, but often through mechanical means.



You shrug your shoulders at the idea of becoming righteous by machinery; but that is all it amounts to, that is what the text teaches. This God's law is a fly-wheel, which once put in motion, helps us through many a strain that would stop us but for that momentous force. Pray one prayer of faith, and the next will be marked by a greater faith, which, when answered, will stimulate to a still greater. Touch one new God's truth, and the thrill will lead to another. One peep into the glories of God's wise government, and you will come again, and again, and again. Every trial borne by the strength of divine power, will infuse a new courage that shall bear ten. Like the body gravitating to the earth, we fall toward heaven the faster by the very force of the movement.

Go on, therefore, Christian, till the flush of success shall mantle thy cheek with the crimson, and thine eye shall flash with the knowledge of power. God's law in Christian service is that power is cumulative. We gather as we go.

It is because of this subtle law that we have



need, on the other hand, to guard ourselves from evil. Everything I have said concerning the accumulation of good, applies equally to evil. If good indulged increases good, evil indulged increases evil. Everything comes easier a second time. Boats that go over Niagara Falls move but slowly when they start. The course of evil increases in a regular arithmetical progression. From him that makes no progress in good, shall be taken away the power that hath been given him. Therefore how necessary to use our all !

And there is also a place here for a word concerning impulse: I speak of impulse to better things. How often these are slighted and disregarded. Such promptings come from the Spirit, the third person of the Holy Trinity. Sometimes people wonder why this one or that one has drifted away, when it seemed he was making sure progress. There is no secret about it. It came about by the law of heaven and earth that decrees that men must use what they have or part from it. He has made no use of promptings. Every inclination has

been laughed or frowned down. The talent has been laid in a napkin. Once let an impulsive, imperative thought arise, and he throws it off in a round of excitement. The little goes under the napkin. Did you think he would come out all right, and make a shining light in the circle of every reform? And were you disappointed? Then you did not know he had taken pains to get rid of his good thought. Yes, he hid it under a napkin, and the impulse was taken away. This is why it was written—Quench not the Spirit; for he who courts that One will receive his promptings; but he who stops his ear to duty's call, even the inclination to good will be taken from him. A thousand pities on his poor benighted soul!

No passage in the whole Word is more suggestive, or opens a wider field for thought, fruitful at once of encouragements and warnings. It breathes at the same moment a blessing and a curse. Use that thou hast and that will bring the more. Remember the maxim, The more we have, the more we get. God's law in earth, and sea, and sky is—

“UNTO EVERY ONE WHICH HATH SHALL BE GIVEN.”

GAIN FROM LOSS.



## GAIN FROM LOSS.

There is that scattereth, and yet increaseth; and there is that withholdeth more than in meet, but it tendeth to poverty.—Prov. xi. 24.

I write upon this subject because the truth of it has been forced upon me so many times. It is something we see verified every day. Each day's two suns bound plentiful illustrations.

There is a great deal of what we call good fortune in life. People of poverty come to affluence, and the ignorant come to learning. Among the thoughtless it passes for luck; but the wise call it law. They say it is based on the principle that gain always comes from loss: that what you have shows how much you have parted with.

Nature outran revelation to be our first teacher in this. We ought to be educated in so much, even if we had no Bible. It was no

new truth which Christ proposed when he gave the parallel to the text, saying that "except a grain of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone." It was a republication of a natural law. Life comes at the cost of life; the corn reproduces itself in its death: we know no other way. Show me a living, growing stalk, and I will dig up the root and find a decayed grain. Bring me a success in full bloom, and I will dig in the soil of the past and find some dead hope or energy.

The farmer says, "I will sow abundantly that I may reap abundantly; for if I sow sparingly, I shall reap also sparingly." The farmer is wise; and the law of the field is the law of life. We reap as we sow. But ever and anon we hear the piteous wail of some disappointed seeker, who has failed to sow, yet expects a harvest. And the counter tells the same tale as the plow. The commercial principle is, outlay before income. If one would sell at a profit, he must buy at a cost. Investment first, dividend afterward. People often wonder why others succeed so well, when they

expend so much. It is no marvel at all. He who would gather must scatter.

“I can’t afford to dress decently well,” says the slouch; but his equal knows that “the apparel oft proclaims the man,” and acts accordingly. Yet the first will wonder at the good fortune which attends the other. “Ha,” exclaims the poor man, “I’ll increase the family income by taking my boy out of school and making him work.” But when the boy grows to a stunted manhood he cannot earn enough to keep even himself, and the aged father is in want. A common sight is a town that will not part with the revenue it receives on liquors. Another is wiser, and parts with revenue, tax and trouble. Improvements are too expensive, some think; but progress declares that nothing is too expensive, if it wins in the long run. Business men could lessen expenses sometimes, but they mean business, and know it is poor policy to be niggardly.

This is only a nosegay of illustrations, plucked at random from the broad field of life. No reason to question the statement, “There is

that withholdeth more than is meet, but it tendeth to poverty." Plainly put in present-day parlance it means, Hold tight to all you get, and failure will hold tight to you. Nature is an exact steward and dispenses all things at set values. Success never smiles on the stingy. Sacrifice is the forerunner of happiness. "Nothing venture, nothing have," is the principle in modern proverb. It is a worldly and a wise one, and because so many have acted on it, One has said that "the children of this world are in their generation wiser than the children of light."

And the law holds good in transactions with God. One must part with present gain for after bliss. You cannot expect to hold to everything in this life and win in the world to come. It is not in keeping with anything to expect something for nothing. In many senses we may say there is no such thing as a gift. Everything is purchased. If one would have he must pay. Give and get. Make investment in things above, forego the baneful, and you will receive in return compound interest



for every confidence imposed in God. One may lose home, friends, property, influence, life itself, for Christ's sake and the gospel's, but in the world to come have eternal life. Aye, it is a principle deep in the nature of things, which says, "There is that scattereth and yet increaseth; and there is that withholdeth more than is meet, but it tendeth to poverty."

Greed is a sin and brings its own punishment. There are more misers than those in monetary affairs, though it is not as evident sometimes. I should say that a man who demanded services from all others, and yet withheld his own power to serve, was as miserly as though he had hoarded his dollars. So is a man miserly who withholds from himself. Many have dwarfed their own happiness or usefulness by meager preparation. It is poor policy to retrench on the means to success. Carpenters and lawyers must have tools or they cannot work. No profession can afford to stint in material; and neither can a Christian deny himself the means of spiritual life. Even his worldly interests will pay him better for the

time spent in spiritual engagements. A busy man will find time for his devotions, and the more he prays the better he succeeds. "To pray well is to have studied well," was Luther's motto. "Since I began to ask God's blessing on my studies," wrote Dr. Payson, "I have done more in one week than I have done in a whole year before." Many a poor, half-hearted Christian bewails the fact that he is no better than he is, while the cause lies in himself. He has denied himself too little, has taken too little pains to secure a blessing, and what wonder that he fails. He is too busy, but he must learn to "take time to make time." He may save for a while, but he will find in the long run that "there is that scattereth and yet increaseth; and there is that withholdeth more than is meet, but it tendeth to poverty."

But people are often blind to the fact that continual outgo wears larger room for continual inflow. What we call selfishness is only shortsightedness. We ought to see our own good, but cannot always do it. When we indulge the immediate want, it may be at the

expense of some greater or more distant one. A mother takes it that the care of noisy children is a burden. But a farther-sighted mother knows that the care of wayward youth is a greater burden. The one withholds her present effort, and the other scatters freely of her care and watchfulness. But the one shall come to the poverty of an age of regret, and the other shall enjoy the returns of her sacrifice. You may generally set it down that selfishness is shortsightedness. God has so arranged the plan of life that we get returns slowly. We are plainly told that bread cast upon the waters is to be found after many days. I know a man who took out a paid-up policy of twenty years in one of our eastern insurance companies some time ago. Patiently he is scattering his money through these years, that by and by he may reap a harvest of gain. Now he receives no return; it is all outlay for twenty years; and then he will receive his own with usury. The plan of God's insurance is not unlike this. The longer we trust investments with him, the heavier the return they

bring. It is to our interest to look so far ahead at reward, and yet that is God's way of teaching men confidence in him. Hope that is seen is not hope. Reward that comes immediately is no stimulus to trust. Too many want to deal with the Almighty as though he were a thief, wanting only the chance to beat them out of their own. God requires perfect confidence, and the requirement is so stringent that he has taken the pains to write it indelibly all over the face of nature, and to inscribe it in revelation. When men come to learn that the lesson of the Bible is only the lesson they have been slowly learning from life, they will, perhaps, have more respect for it, since it comes with a double authority. And obedience to this law is to our own advantage. That is, there are two ways of living—one which demands of others and refuses to give, and one which gives and waits patiently for return. The former is called selfishness, but the latter is known as wisdom. And yet the difference between them is only a time question. One waits, and the other will not, though it be to his ad-

vantage. So it is found true that what is God's requirement is our best interest, and our interests and God's will meet and blend.

A common deception practiced upon us by the Evil Influence within, is that God's ways are so hard, and that Christianity is all sacrifice. But the truth is it is like the the beef-steak you bought for your breakfast, like the ball you paid to attend, like the education you struggled for as a means of livelihood, like the great pains the author takes in the production of his book, or the dramatist of his play, or the musician of his opera, or the artist of his picture. It is all loss before gain, outlay before income, scattering before increasing. Man is a kind of Shylock, demanding what his nature prompts him to. Nature and God are righteous judges, granting what we have paid for. There is an exact equivalent for every bond, and justice sees we get no less, no more. This is the eternal order in all things, working wherever existence is. Every particle of matter in motion displaces another. No power is lost, neither

can there be power except at the expense of power. For every gain there is a cost, for every life a death. None reap who have not sown. "Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you." Empty yourself and be filled; for nature permits no vacuum. Pay the required price and nothing shall be withheld. He who craves the pearls of honor, happiness or peace in the field of life, must go, sell all that he hath, and buy. The world is a great board of exchange. Everything comes at a price, good or bad. Napoleon won renown at the price of mercy; and Judas got his thirty pieces of silver, for which he paid the last spark of his manhood. Luther and Lincoln won glory and peace of conscience, but at the price of anguish and sleepless nights. And the immortal Washington stands first in the hearts of his countrymen because no trial was too hard, no sacrifice too great, for the love he bore to country, home and freedom.

Everyone must be wisely free with what he has of time, of talent, of energy. Sooner or

later the return will come for every sacrifice of whatever resource. If it does not come now, it will come later; if not in this world, then in the next. If we realized this more, we would spend more time in prayer, put more effort into work, use our incomes more freely. In a word, we hold tight to what we have, not thinking that he that giveth—not money only, but whatever it may be—but lendeth to the Lord. God is not a hard master, asking service which he does not and will not requite, but a gentle master who will not receive what he will not pay for a thousand fold. So many people imagine hard things of religion and its author; when if they would only examine, it would be found that we are living without a question under the same requirements of the world about us. We give, we wait, we get return; we plan for long lengths of time, we patiently hope, we enter into enjoyment. Here and there on every hand men are prodigal with their resources, and are gaining for what they have wisely given up. Yet when it comes to religion it seems a hard thing to sacri-

fice in. It is because there is not a due appreciation of the returns it brings. Men are all too anxious to cling to what they have, to enjoy all they can of the world, and withhold from God the service due. It is a wise maxim, applicable not only to things of this world but to things of the next, which tells us that "there is that scattereth and yet increaseth; and there is that withholdeth more than is meet, but it tendeth to poverty."

The Christian needs to learn trust and patience. Give God his time and no one will be the loser. Out of chaos he called the earth and heavens; and out of privations he unfolds a never-ending supply for chaste lovers of himself and his righteousness.

When Mrs. Browning, whom England calls Shakespeare's daughter, speaks, we listen.

"O, the little birds sang east, the little birds  
sang west !

And I said in underbreath,

All our life is mixed with death,

And who knows which is best ?



“O, the little birds sang east, the little birds  
sang west!

And I smiled to think God's goodness  
Flows around our incompleteness;  
Round our restlessness his rest.”

Whomsoever God calls to an inheritance of  
tumults, he calls to the inheritance incorrupti-  
ble and undefiled. If you lay down the dear  
and the sweet in this life, he will give it back  
in the witness of the stars. God's two pre-  
sentations are cross and crown, and they who  
bear shall wear.



LAWS OF INFLUENCE. \*



## LAWS OF INFLUENCE.

They brought forth the sick into the streets, and laid them on beds and couches, that at the least, the shadow of Peter passing by might overshadow some of them.—Acts v. 15.

Every life casts a shadow. We leave an outline of character wherever we go. None of us lives to himself, and influence reaches beyond our own length. Impressions may be slight or lasting, but they are true. We stand up one beside the other, and our shadows fall full length upon each. When one character puts its silhouette on another we call it by no sensuous name, but speak of influence. And yet influence is only the casting of spiritual shadows, if such a figure might be permitted.

And we mistake greatly when we say that influence is the mere power to move opinion. It is that, but it is more. It is the power to leave impression on the feelings, as well as on the intellect and will. I may speak with you

and not touch your conviction, but will make some kind of impression on your feelings. The point I seek to gain may not be attained. But something else has been achieved. When we meet to convince one another, the particular conviction may be wanting, yet some conviction will not fail. We cannot measure influence by mental achievement only, but by emotional consequence as well. Therefore the man who denies his influence is only half right.

We all cast shadows; that is, we all leave impressions. You cannot come into contact with me unless I feel it. Every one has an atmosphere he carries with him, and people feel its balm or chill at his approach. Did you ever meet one who left you feeling exactly as you felt before you saw him? Feelings are very sensitive, and every time spirit touches spirit there are two impressions. Rather we may say that souls have a peculiar imparting power, and every time they meet they infuse themselves one into the other. When you and I come in contact, we each give a portion of ourselves to the other, and when we separate

we are not the same persons who met. The part you gave me of yourself I have taken and blended with my own nature. Perceptibly or imperceptibly the tinge of my character is changed. So with you. We are mutual character makers.

Each of us now bears the impress of a thousand souls. We cannot show ourselves without showing our modifications. When one speaks it is not the original self, but a compound. When he utters a sentiment it is not the pure product of his individuality, but a modification of Virgil, Milton, Hawthorne, parents, brothers, sisters, teachers, friends, and enemies who have left their impress on his thought. Even the poor beggar at the door, who received of your charity, made your sympathies a little larger when you heard his tale of woe. And the boorish debater in the railway car gave you a still greater dislike for uneducated enthusiasm. All these leave their mark. "None of us liveth to himself." There is power in soul friction. People will meet and shadows will fall.

Again we may observe, that influence for its own sake is not always attainable. Will power does not bring everything, and there are things in life that evade us when we pursue them. Often that which is most valuable comes when we are seeking something else. People set out in pursuit of pleasure, but it does not lie in the bright fields and upon the smooth traveled roads, waiting to be taken. Like honor, it recoils from easy, wanton touch, but gives itself to the weary toiler, passing its secluded, darkened cell. Honors, happiness and influence are coy, and refuse to be taken, but are easily found and snared by those who seek the good. Who seeks for power over men will never attain it. Let one seek first that inward probity that beams in every look and tone, and what he asks will discover itself. Influence is not a visible power, but an aroma, perfuming the atmosphere of thought and life. What one is will determine what he gives forth. What you make of others will depend on what you have made of yourself. Napoleon's men



fell at his feet because he ruled himself better than they could rule themselves.

Get inspiration. Our lives are too earthly. They smell of potatoes and bacon. The strength that bends mind feeds on ambrosia. The Shakespearean fire that kindles the glow in your thoughts was lighted by Prometheus. So was that of Garibaldi. So was that of Carlyle. The divine enthusiasm that rages in one soul sets fire to another. But how can a stone put the prairies in a blaze? If I would inspire others, I myself must feel the divine glow. If I would lay truth heavily upon my neighbor, it must first crush me to earth. When we get the divine conviction of enthusiasm, and lay our hands on others, then our words will touch and burn. First fill thyself, then thrill thy neighbor.

The power within makes the power without. It was because in Christ dwelt all the fullness of the God-head bodily, that men revered him when he spoke. The soul of simplicity and love that filled the life to overflowing drew the multitudes after him. Sublime were the

words that fell on the ears of shepherds and fishermen like the benediction of a new world; but sublimer far was the divine essence from which they came. Truer and tenderer than his deeds of mercy was the great swelling soul within, from which ever broke the new marvels of his matchless life. And when he walked with men, they felt the greatness that they could not see, and were drawn by the magic power. Would you wield some power with others? Then forget the end you seek; be first greater than thy fellow, and by the universal law of gravitation, the greater will attract the less. Only thus may we have abiding power with men.

So much for shadow casting considered subjectively. But we constantly fall under the shadow of others. Half we do is under an unconscious influence. Call to mind the time you were thrown in company with that vivacious person who called forth your latent energy. He was not a so-called man of influence; he did not endeavor to change your opinion or to give you new notions; he had his own notions—

not striking, nor original, nor forcibly expressed—yet you found yourself drawn out, and you expressed yourself as you had not done before. And when you came to look back on that time, you found it had been the birth hour of some conviction. And you remember also how your thoughts have been dried and your tongue bound, in the company of some other whose soul was not in sympathy with yours. Some would call it lack of influence. Rather let us say it was influence of a positive kind, having just as much to do in making life and feelings as the other. They only moved in opposite directions.

In the matter of receiving impressions we note two dangers that lie before us. They are both extremes. One is that we are apt to steel ourselves against impressions, and the other is that we are apt to be too easily moved. Prejudice often leads us to overlook men's merits and powers. We can see nothing worthy in them, because we look through dark glasses. We refuse truth often because it is mixed with error. We do not appreciate

strength because of known weakness. But this is not fair, either to our neighbor or ourselves. Gold found in the mountains is mixed with stone and foreign ore; and they pulverize the quartz, and sink the precious metal with mercury, and so find the grains the eye could not perceive. Yellow gold sprinkles every life, but we refuse it because of the dross. Don't think that the weakling has no word for you, because you are his superior in most things. The pauper and the criminal might open to you and me a revelation if we would receive it. In the new dispensation a little child shall lead them. We ought to learn to take off our hats before Truth, even when we meet her in a hovel. Too often we refuse obeisance to Nobility, because, forsooth, we find it dressed in common garb. In the silent tomb lies many a promise of better things—dead because the world refused to recognize its humble parentage. I do not care where truth comes from if it is pure. I do not care where the lily grows if it lifts its white petals towards me. But mental aristocracy is a thing of its own kind,

and haughtily ignores what is not of high intellectual origin. It is only fair to ourselves to throw ourselves open to conviction, no matter whence the prompting may come.

The other danger to be avoided is too great aptness to impression. The one who wins our respect is too apt to win our reverence. We find ourselves saying, It must be true if he says so. Very willingly we submit to a dictatorial rule and obey orders. The tendency has always been toward hero worship, and probably always will be in some form or other. I am not justified in adopting every dogma of a political idol. But almost unbounded confidence in a worthy citizen or friend, often leads us to overstep the line of propriety unwittingly. He has been found right a hundred times, we argue, therefore it is safe to follow him wherever he goes. But "we are not bound to be good men's apes."

Considering these two dangers, what we need is to soften our impressionable natures on the one hand, and to guard them on the other. We must not steel ourselves to the

touch of the lowly and uneducated, nor receive implicitly every word of the great. God gave the impressionable nature, and he also gave the judgment to stand sentinel over it. We are responsible not only for our influence upon others, but also for the influence they have upon us.

Amidst so many shadows the Christian may feel timorous sometimes. Around are shadows falling thick and fast, evil casting greater length than good. But he believes in the power of his God, and that is enough.

“ Right forever on the scaffold,  
Wrong forever on the throne;  
But that scaffold sways the future,  
And behind the dim unknown  
Standeth God amid the shadows,  
Keeping watch above his own.”

Peter's shadow heals no more; but to-day as of old Jesus of Nazareth passeth by. Bring your couch where the shadow of his influence falls, and receive the benediction of his presence.









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